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A REVIEW OF PAUL M. VAN BUREN'S

THE SECULAR MEANING OF THE GOSPEL

A Thesis submitted to the Dean and Faculty
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by

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A REVIEW OF PAUL M. VAN BUREN'S
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Introduction

"This is a time of ferment in new ideas about God and religion," stated Archbishop Ramsey of Canterbury recently. "In particular, a number of writers in recent years have spoken of 'Christianity without religion', and of the need to discard familiar images of God."¹ Whether we agree or not to Bultmann's crusade against the 'mythological', to Tillich's, against the 'supra-natural', and to Bonhoeffer's, against the 'religious', we must agree with Bishop Robinson in seeing a significance in "the number of straws apparently blowing in the same direction."² Think of the day when the Scripture was the "Book", and was "at every point the outward garb of an entire system of spiritual truth, a coherent and integrated body of spiritual and moral instruction, veiled in the outward forms of the 'letter', but capable of being discerned by those to whom its author, the Holy Spirit, gives the key."³

¹ Michael Ramsey, Image, Old and New, London, 1963, p.3.

² John A.T. Robinson, Honest to God, Philadelphia, 1963, p.21.

³ G.W.Lampe & K.J.Woolcombe, Essays on Typology, London, 1957, pp.30-31.

Every word of the Scripture pointed with unbroken strength to the Truth, which was hidden only to be discovered. The metaphysical understanding which comprehended eternal and divine reality with the temporal and earthly life of man in a rationally comprehensible single whole is no longer tenable.

"The thing that keeps coming back to me," so runs one of Bonhoeffer's letters from prison, "what is Christianity, and indeed, what is Christ for us today? The time when men could be told everything by means of words, whether theological or simply pious, is over, and so is the time of inwardness and conscience, which is to say, the time of religion as such."⁴ The plain fact seems to be that a considerable proportion "of our contemporaries haven't the least idea of what we are talking about when we speak of God."⁵ Archbishop Ramsey recalls his experience in a mission at Oxford in 1960, when he began his address with the words: "I am going to be speaking about God. You would expect that. But I am not at the outset going to use the word 'God'. This is because the word has become conventional, and I am asking you to think about a reality rather than a word."⁶ But, how can we know a reality apart from the word that is supposed to signify it?

4 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, 1953, p. 122.

5 G. Ebeling, Wort und Glaube, Tübingen, 1960, p.145; as quoted by Paul M. van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, New York, 1963, p. 82.

6 Ramsey, M., p. 5.

We cannot ignore van Buren's point when he says: "Today, we cannot even understand the Nietzschean cry that 'God is dead!' for if it were so, how could we know? No. The problem is now that the word 'God' is dead."⁷ We could eventually, as indeed Bishop Robinson warns us, "be no more able to convince men of the existence of a God 'out there' whom they must call in to order their lives than persuade them to take seriously the gods of Olympus."⁸

van Buren's The Secular Meaning of the Gospel arises from this ferment of our time. And as such, with his competent scholarship, his work merits our serious concern.

Our task in reviewing The Secular Meaning of the Gospel will be directed to the examination of its internal structure. As his work is allegedly based on a method of 'linguistic analysis', we shall pay special attention to the problem of language. Finally, we shall present a possible alternative to van Buren's proposal, also from a point of view of linguistic analysis.

⁷ van Buren, p. 103.

⁸ Robinson, p. 43.

Chapter One: van Buren's Proposal

Paul M. van Buren begins his The Secular Meaning of the Gospel with these words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's:

Honesty demands that we recognize that we must live in the world as if there were no God. And this is just what we do recognize - before God! God himself drives us to this realization. - God makes us know that we must live as men who can get along without Him. The God who is with us is the God who forsakes us (Mark 15:34)! We stand continually in the presence of the God who makes us live in the world without the God hypothesis.⁹

And van Buren goes on to say that Bonhoeffer describes his situation

...as a Christian in a world 'come of age,' in which men no longer believe in a transcendent realm where their longings will be fulfilled. Wishing not to retreat from this new world, Bonhoeffer began what he called a 'nonreligious interpretation of biblical concepts.'¹⁰

Bonhoeffer however, "had scarcely the time to outline his proposal in a few letters written from prison before his death." But, "His question still lies before us: How can the Christian who is himself a secular man understand his faith in a secular way?"¹¹ He "wanted to retrieve from the smothering arms of the religious subjectivity of 'liberal' theology the concern of traditional theology for God's work in Jesus Christ, and yet to acknowledge the critical study of the biblical documents and traditional formulations of

⁹ van Buren, p.1 (quote from Bonhoeffer).

¹⁰ van Buren, p.1-2.

¹¹ van Buren, p. 2.

Christian faith undertaken in the nineteenth century."¹²

In van Buren's own claim, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel is an attempt to answer Bonhoeffer's unanswered question with "the help of a method far removed from Bonhoeffer's thought."¹³ This method is linguistic analysis. van Buren's program, then, consists of three areas of concern: "the conservative concern for Christology, the 'liberal' concern with a contemporary way of thinking", and finally, van Buren's own contribution, "the logical analysis of theological statements."¹⁴

Thus, van Buren's thesis begins with a critical evaluation of contemporary theology represented by Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. The theological "right" which he refers to is attributed by van Buren to Barth with approval. It demands that theology make clear the 'objective fact' of God's act in Jesus Christ, without losing sight of it in the appropriation of the benefits of Christ by the believer. For, the objective fact of Easter was decisive for Christ's disciples.

The ~~d~~disciples were not merely challenged to make the cross their own, to understand themselves as men who were dead to their past and alive to their future. They were not called to make a decision upon which their whole destiny would rest. No, something happened to them before all that.¹⁵

12 van Buren, p. 2.

13 van Buren, p. 2.

14. van Buren, p. 18.

15 van Buren, p. 169.

However, the weakness of Barth lies in the fact that he seems to think that "what we say may be considered without respect to how we say it."¹⁶ For, as Bonhoeffer contended, "to separate Christian faith and secular life in the world is to reject the very heart of the Gospel." van Buren then states: "We shall conduct this study on the assumption that being a Christian does not deny one's involvement in the secular world and its way of thinking."¹⁷

The theological 'left', on the other hand, "has urged us to think through Christian faith in the light of the critique of modern thought." "But," he continues, "we would take this demand seriously."

It will not do simply to translate the difficult word "God" into some highly or subtly qualified phrase such as "our ultimate concern," or worse, "transcendent reality," or even, "the ground and end of all things." These expressions are masquerading as empirical name tags, and they are used as though they referred to something, but they lead us right back into the problem of ancient thought, or they put us in the worse situation of speaking a meaningless language.¹⁸

Thus, in van Buren's claim neither the so-called theological 'right' nor 'left' has given a wholly satisfactory answer to Bonhoeffer's question: "How can the Christian who is himself a secular man understand his faith in a secular way?"

16 van Buren, p. 9.

17 van Buren, p. 18.

18 van Buren, p. 170.

Furthermore, neither Barth nor Bultmann has really acknowledged the full import of the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. Both theologians are one in their conviction "that the documents at our disposal do not provide the careful historian with the material for a biography of Jesus, nor even for a reasonably probable interpretation of him as a man." And in van Buren's view, the problem at issue carries grave connotations, for, "neither Barth nor Bultmann has been unhappy about this state of affairs. In fact, one receives the impression that they would be sorry if it were otherwise!"¹⁹ He admits that there are "serious difficulties in taking the 'objective' side of the Gospel as straightforward empirical assertions."²⁰ Both Barth and Bultmann have seen that if the New Testament proclamations of Jesus as Christ were taken as straightforward empirical assertions, faith and the Gospel are in serious trouble in the modern world. Nevertheless, van Buren contends that the alternative of ignoring the historical assertions "is no solution."²¹ And he claims that it is in the function of the language of the New Testament kerygma that the true answer may be sought. "...when the language of the Gospel is analyzed so as to reveal its logical meaning or function, the history of Jesus of Nazareth proves to be indispensable to it; if this history is pushed

¹⁹ van Buren, p. 118.

²⁰ van Buren, p. 70.

²¹ van Buren, p. 116.

into the background, faith may be a perspective, but it is not historical at all, or it is grounded in some other piece of history."²² Since "a Christian who is himself a secular man may only understand the Gospel in a secular way by seeing it as an expression of a historical perspective,"²³ in van Buren's view the relevance of historicity is crucial to the whole meaning of the Gospel to the modern Christian.

Thus, van Buren speaks of his own program as being close to the existentialist-theological interpretation of the Gospel but differing in one crucial point, namely, the fact that "the history of Jesus of Nazareth is central in and integral to" his interpretation. And he proclaims, furthermore, that "the key to the relationship between faith and Jesus is placed where the New Testament places it: in Easter."

Bonhoeffer hoped that a "non-religious interpretation of biblical concepts "would both overcome the weakness of liberal theology and at the same time do justice to its legitimate question. Our method is one which never occurred to Bonhoeffer, but our interpretation may nonetheless serve to justify his hope."²⁴

The method of linguistic analysis also meets another aspect of Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer

did not write as a professional Christian or qualified theologian who understood the Gospel perfectly clearly and was only looking for a technique of communication or popular idiom to reach the man of today "out there," outside the church. On the

22 van Buren, p. 96.

23 van Buren, p. 193.

24 van Buren, p. 171.

contrary, he wrote as a citizen of this modern, adult world, as much inclined as the next man to consult the weather map and the meteorologist for the answer to a question about a change in the weather, rather than to "take it to the Lord in prayer." Modern man is not "out there" to be spoken to; he is within the being of every Christian trying to understand. Bonhoeffer refused to retreat from his ordinary way of thinking into a Christian ghetto of traditional formulae in order to preserve his faith.²⁵

Certainly we live in the world today "where statements about 'how things are' are expected to have some sort of relationship to men's experience of each other and of things."²⁶ Since linguistic analysis "reflects the empirical attitudes which appear to be characteristic of secular thought"²⁷ it can show us "the various empirical footings of different theological assertions, and it suggests ways in which the meaning of apparently transempirical aspects of the language of Christian faith can be understood."²⁸

Linguistic analysis exposes the function of language in just those areas on which modern theology seeks to shed light: the world in which the 'average' Christian finds himself. Theologians concerned with the 'relevance' of the Gospel for ordinary believers in their ordinary life and ordinary work should be particularly open to a method of analysis which appeals so frequently to the ordinary use of language.²⁹

In much the same way with Ludwig Wittgenstein, van Buren would say: theological problems are not empirical problems; they are solved, however, by looking into the workings of our

25 van Buren, p. 2.

26 van Buren, p. 195.

27 van Buren, p. 195.

28 van Buren, p. 196.

29 van Buren, p. 195.

language.

"According to linguistic analysts," states van Buren, "if we wish to know the meaning of a word or statement, we must look at the way it functions in actual use." "We shall apply this deceptively simple, but (as we shall see) far-reaching, thesis of the linguistic analysts to the problem of a contemporary understanding of the Gospel"; ³⁰ the secular meaning of the Gospel will be revealed by "a careful, functional analysis of the language of the New Testament, the Fathers, and contemporary believers".³¹ And van Buren recommends that his reader "see the language of faith in the way expressed, on the assumption that there is a possibility of his holding empirical attitudes" similar to van Buren's own. The commendation is made in the form of two principles: a) "a restatement of the Gospel should allow the logical structure of its language to become clear"; and b) it is advantageous to approach the problem of Christology by way of an investigation of the peculiar way in which Christians talked from the first about the man Jesus of Nazareth.³² It will lead us to see that "theological statements which are meaningless in a secular age when they are taken as straightforward empirical assertions about the world, nevertheless prove to have a use and a meaning as the expressions of a

³⁰ van Buren, p. 16.

³¹ van Buren, p. 19.

³² van Buren, p. 156.

historical perspective with far-reaching empirical consequences in a man's life."³³

What van Buren means by linguistic analysis is, then, a deciding factor for evaluation of his work. It will be worth our while to quote his introduction at length:

Linguistic analysis, although it is related historically to the Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle of the 1920's, should not be confused with the somewhat dogmatic spirit and teachings of that philosophy. Indeed, its deepest roots lie in the tradition of British empiricism. It is more accurate to speak of linguistic analysis as a method than a school or movement of philosophy, for what its practitioners share is only a common interest and a common logical method. Their interest is in the function of language, and their method lies in the logical analysis of how words and statements function, both in normal and in abnormal use.... Logical Positivism judged all theological statements to be meaningless because they could not meet the verification principle of that philosophy: that, apart from the assertions of logic and mathematics, only statements which can be verified or falsified empirically are meaningful. Statements having to do with an invisible, ineffable God, a transcendent "absolute," and the whole field of classical metaphysics in general could be neither proved nor disproved. Having no empirical function, they could not be called true or false, and they were consequently regarded as meaningless. During the past quarter of a century, however, there has been a shift toward a more flexible conception of language. The verification principle has continued to be important, but it has another function in contemporary linguistic analysis. There are a variety of "language-games," activities with their appropriate languages, and a modified verification principle is now used to ask what sort of things would count for an assertion and what sort of things would count against it.... It is now recognized that different kinds of language are appropriate to different situations. The language of love is not that of biology, nor is the

³³ van Buren, p. 199.

language of politics that of physics.... The modified verification principle can help us to sort out the pieces of our language, lest we try to understand the language of love in terms of biology or the language of politics in terms of physics. This way of doing philosophy challenges the Christian to think clearly, speak simply, and say what he means without using words in unusual ways, unless he makes it quite clear what he is doing.³⁴

van Buren then chooses Antony Flew's parable to introduce the method of linguistic analysis.

"Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says, 'Some gardener must tend this plot.' The other disagrees. 'There is no gardener.' So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. 'But perhaps he is an invisible gardener.' So they set up a barbed wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds....But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movement of the wire ever betrays an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the Believer is not convinced. 'But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves.' At last the Sceptic despairs, 'But what is left of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?'" Flew concludes, "A fine, brash hypothesis may thus be killed by inches, the death of a thousand qualifications."³⁵

For Flew, to make a true assertion is the same as to deny a corresponding false assertion. He believes that "the peculiar danger, the endemic evil, of theological utterance" lies precisely in its unfalsifiability.³⁶

³⁴ van Buren, pp. 14-15.

³⁵ van Buren, p. 3.

³⁶ Antony Flew, "Theology and Falsification, I, A." A. MacIntyre, ed., New Essays in Philosophical Theology, NY, 1955, p. 97.

In earlier days prophets might castigate their sinning compatriots by announcing that a flood or a crop failure was God's act of punishment for wickedness. As better natural explanations for such natural events have become available, however, theistic language has retreated from the possibility of falsification, no longer promising natural disasters to follow in the wake of moral disorders. At any point where fact might tell against the language of theology, theological speech is hastily qualified to keep it from falsification.³⁷

If, however, the meaning of a statement is identical with the experiences relevant to its verification, then "gradually to remove an assertion from the possibility of verification (or falsification) is, in effect, gradually to strip this language of its meaning."³⁸ "A fine brash hypothesis may thus be killed by inches, the death by a thousand qualifications."³⁹

When any state of events is compatible with an assertion, then the putative assertion is either analytic or meaningless.⁴⁰

Flew then questions: "Just what would have to happen not merely (morally and wrongly) to tempt but also (logically and rightly) to entitle us to say 'God does not love us' or even 'God does not exist'?"⁴¹

Until this question is answered, Flew contends, the theist's language is doomed by its slippery compatibility with every state of affairs to be empty of factual meaning; but once the theist ventures to

³⁷ Frederick Ferré, Language, Logic and God, NY, Evanston and London, 1961, p. 33.

³⁸ Ferré, p.33.

³⁹ Flew, p.97.

⁴⁰ Ferré, p.34.

⁴¹ Flew, p.98-99.

answer, his language has been opened to falsification and thus to probable disproof.⁴²

The point which is expounded here by Flew is admittedly a variation of the "verification principle" the classical discussion of which we find in Alfred J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic. Ayer states:

The criterion which we use to test the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the criterion of verifiability. We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express - that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false. If, on the other hand, the putative proposition is of such a character that the assumption of its truth, or falsehood, is consistent with any assumption whatsoever concerning the nature of his future experience, then, as far as he is concerned, it is, if not a tautology, a mere pseudo-proposition. The sentence expressing it may be emotionally significant to him; but it is not literally significant.⁴³

Using this criterion, we find that there are four kinds of sentence, of which we shall quote from James W. Woelfel's fine summation:

- (1) true propositions (also called contingent or synthetic propositions): sentences verifiable by observation;
- (2) false propositions: sentences falsifiable by observation;
- (3) tautologies (also called necessary or analytic propositions): sentences which express logical equivalence ($p \equiv p$) but which thus require no verification. Tautologies are not false, but their truth is the formal truth of logical convention which has no reference to empirical data.

⁴² Ferré, p. 34.

⁴³ A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, New York, p. 35.

- (4) Pseudo-propositions: sentences "of such a character that the assumption of.../their/ truth, or falsehood, is consistent with any assumption whatsoever concerning the nature of.../one's/ future experience..." In other words, pseudo-propositions are neither verifiable nor falsifiable and thus are neither true nor false. No set of observations would count either for or against a pseudo-proposition.⁴⁴

What is behind such verification rules is obviously a pre-supposition that logical syntax reflects the true picture of the world. Hence, the drive to eliminate ambiguity, vagueness and impression of terms by way of the verification principle. And deeply ingrained is the view that "every notion is a class of observable facts."⁴⁵ The basic premise behind such a theory may be stated as follows:

For the logical positivist reality consists of the sum total of empirical entities which logically speaking are distinct from one another. Words are signs which are attached by man to these distinct, atomistic entities and which copy the nature of the entities. The verification principle sets the norm for that copying by describing the observations one could make to check how faithful the copying is. ...The verification principle is a proposed tautology: "meaning" equals "capable of being verified by empirical observations."⁴⁶

Since Ayer took his positivistic stand many objections have been raised from various quarters, which culminate roughly in three points: (1) some apprehension about the meaning of a proposition must precede the raising of it as

⁴⁴ James W. Woelfel, "Linguistic Empiricism and Christian Philosophy", B.D.Honor Thesis, Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., 1962, p. 14.

⁴⁵ R.G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics, Oxford, 1962, pp144-145.

⁴⁶ From Warren E. Crews' paper, "Linguistic Analysis and Christian Apologetics" for Theology 114 at ETS, Jan. 16, 1964.

a proposition; one cannot really view everything in terms of 'is this proposition true?'. "Every answer to the question says something about the structure of being".⁴⁷ "Even in the means-end structure of 'reasoning' assertions about the nature of things are presupposed which themselves are not based on technical reason."⁴⁸ 2) there is no one-to-one correlation between sense-data and material object: "Recent discussions on phenomenalism, for example, tend to show that no conjunction or disjunction or sense-datum statements, however complex, entail the existence or non-existence of a certain material object"⁴⁹; and finally 3) physical objects are not necessarily all the objects there are: "The science of psychology had been founded centuries ago on the recognition that by means of our senses we never observe any facts at all, we only undergo feelings."⁵⁰

Ayer himself originally made distinction between strong and weak verifiability:

A proposition is said to be verifiable, in the strong sense of the term, if, and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience. But it is verifiable, in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol.I, Chicago, 1951, p.20.

⁴⁸ Tillich, p. 73.

⁴⁹ Friedrich Waismann, "Verifiability", Antony Flew, ed., Logic and Language (first series), Oxford, 1955, p.118.

⁵⁰ Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics, Oxford, 1962, p.144-145.

⁵¹ Ayer, p.37.

But by 1946 he also recognized that such a distinction was a false alternative; that in fact

all empirical propositions are hypotheses which are continually subject to further experience; and from this it would follow not merely that the truth of any such propositions never was conclusively established but that it never could be; for however strong the evidence in its favour, there would never be a point at which it was impossible for further experience to go against it.⁵²

The result is that there is only one kind of verification principle, that which has previously been labeled as "weak!"

Flew's principle of falsifiability is precisely a variation of the "weak" verification principle. We must remember, however, that the three objections against the positivist's stand still apply in principle to Ayer's "weak" verification principle and to the basic premises behind Flew's falsifiability test. For they still insist basically that a statement cannot be said to be true if it is not empirically verifiable. van Buren basically accepts the validity of such a principle as the "weak" verification principle. His claim is that his The Secular Meaning of the Gospel would present a picture which "would not appear to be logically puzzling to Flew's sceptical explorer."⁵³

van Buren's program consists of adopting Richard M. Hare's line of thought, namely, "a man's faith and his theology

⁵² Ayer, pp. 9-10.

⁵³ van Buren, p.110.

have meaning even though the theistic rug has been pulled out from under him."⁵⁴, and then expounding along the line of Ian T. Ramsey, T. R. Miles, and R. B. Braithwaite. In his own words, his program takes the form of defining "a consensus", and applying "the method and results of these philosophers for a reconstruction of the kerygma and Christology."⁵⁵ As van Buren admits, his "attempt to define a consensus does justice to no single position of the language analysts". Nevertheless, he hopes that his "summary" will indicate the "trend of their interpretations of Christianity".⁵⁶

James W. Woelfel has ably demonstrated that "all the 'non-metaphysical' Christian responses to linguistic empiricism are variations of Hare's 'blik' argument."⁵⁷ It is then perhaps natural for van Buren to start from, and depend primarily on, Hare's blik defense of religious language.

Flew's parable, with which we began our study, has been answered by R.M.Hare, who begins by granting that Flew is "completely victorious" on the grounds which he has marked out. Hare grants that if religious or theological assertions are taken as statements about "how things are"...they must be judged as meaningless. The logic of Flew's parable is perfectly sound. Having made this concession, Hare has cleared the way for his reply. He begins by telling another parable about a student who has a peculiar attitude about dons: he is convinced that they all want to kill him. However many apparently friendly dons he meets, however friends try to persuade him by recalling his own experience or theirs, his atti-

⁵⁴ van Buren, p. 87.

⁵⁵ van Buren, p.101.

⁵⁶ van Buren, p.101.

⁵⁷ Woelfel, p. 61.

tude does not change. Hare has invented the word blik for a fundamental attitude. The student in his parable has an insane "blik" about dons; we have a ~~same~~ one, we would say, for Hare points out that we are never without a "blik", or we could not say that the student is insane, that he is wrong and we are right. A "blik" is not achieved by empirical inquiry.⁵⁸

As Hare conceived it, blik is man's basic conviction. "Flew has shown that a blik does not consist in an assertion or system of them; but nevertheless it is very important to have the right blik."⁵⁹

It was Hume who taught us that our whole commerce with the world depends upon our blik about the world; and that difference between bliks about the world cannot be settled by observation of what happens in the world.

The mistake of the position which Flew selects for attack is to regard this kind of talk as some sort of explanation, as scientists are accustomed to use the word. As such, it would obviously be ludicrous. We no longer believe in God as an Atlas- nous n'avons pas besoin de cette hypothèse. But it is nevertheless true to say that, as Hume saw, without a blik there can be no explanation; for it is by our bliks that we decide what is and what is not an explanation.⁶⁰

"It is apparent," as Woelfel states, that "Hare's defense of religious language is a variation of an argument familiar to philosophers and theologians!"

In a more cautious form the blik argument is a standard weapon in the arsenal of Christian apologetics.

⁵⁸van Buren, p. 85-86.

⁵⁹ Richard M. Hare, "Theology and Falsification, i, B", A. MacIntyre, ed., New Essays in Philosophical Theology, NY, 1955, p. 100.

⁶⁰ Hare, p. 101.

It asserts that basic interpretation of man and the universe--world-views--are beyond rational and empirical demonstration.⁶¹

In fact, Christians have known it from the very beginning of Christian history.

The creeds in which Christians have been taught to confess their faith have never been couched in the formula: 'God exists and has the following attributes'; but always in the formula: 'I believe' or originally 'We believe in God'; and have gone on to say what it is that I, or we, believe about him.⁶²

What Hare is suggesting, then, is this deceptively simple assertion that "a man's faith and his theology have a meaning, even though the theistic rug has been pulled out from under him."⁶³ The secular interpretation of Christian faith that van Buren attempts to establish is to be built precisely on that assertion.

The language of faith expressed in the Gospel may be understood if it is seen to express, define, or commend a basic presupposition by which a man lives and acts in the world of men. ...although the assertions of the Gospel are meaningless if they are taken empirically, they do have a use.⁶⁴

It must be pointed out, however, that Hare's blik argument differs from our ordinary understanding of Christian proclamation on one important point, that is, in its strong grounding in subjectivism. The fact is that Hare accepts Flew's point whole-heartedly and establishes his own defense

61 Woelfel, p. 60.

62 Collingwood, pp. 187-188.

63 van Buren, p. 87.

64 van Buren, p. 143.

of religious assertion over it. "No proof", Hare contends, could indeed "be given to make us adopt one blik rather than another."⁶⁵ As far as Hare is concerned, Flew's only problem is that, after showing the unfalsifiability of religious assertion, "he turned to backgammon to take his mind off the problem."⁶⁶ What Hare has shown, therefore, is virtually the complete acceptance of what Ayer called the "weak" verification principle. The positivistic tenor in Hare's basic assertion is thus undeniable. And so, subsequently, in van Buren's thesis it is also manifest. The subjectivism in van Buren is the measure by which we know the degree of his dependence on Hare.

The problem of subjectivism in Hare's argument was immediately spotted by Flew in the following reply to Hare:

Any attempt to analyse Christian religious utterances as expressions or affirmations of a blik rather than as (at least would-be) assertions about the cosmos is fundamentally misguided. First, because thus interpreted they would be entirely unorthodox. If Hare's religion really is a blik, involving no cosmological assertions about the nature and activities of a supposed personal creator, then surely he is not a Christian at all? Second, because thus interpreted, they would scarcely do the job they do. If they were not even intended as assertions then many religious activities would become fraudulent, or merely silly. If 'You ought because it is God's will' asserts no more than 'You ought', then the person who prefers the former phraseology is not really giving a reason, but a fraudulent substitute for one, a dialectical dud check.⁶⁷

65 See Hare, p. 101.

66 Hare, p. 101.

67. van Buren, p. 86.

Now, of the two aspects of subjectivism, Flew's first point has been termed "fairly weak" by Woelfel, "because many responsible and intelligent Christians today...are no longer sure exactly what 'orthodoxy' is."⁶⁸ And Woelfel considers Flew's second criticism to be "devastating".⁶⁹ Apparently van Buren is of the same opinion. He brushes off Flew's first charge by simply stating: "but what is orthodoxy in the era when many sincere Christians do not know what to do with the word 'God' or can use it only in a way entirely different from the 'orthodox' way of the early centuries of Christianity?"⁷⁰ Consequently, while van Buren inherits the two problematic aspects of Hare's subjectivism, he has built up, as we shall see later, a fairly strong thesis against Flew's second criticism (which has to do with the objectivity of the religious assertion) with the aid of Ian Ramsey and R.G.Collingwood, but has neglected Flew's first charge (which has to do with the universality of the religious assertion). This first charge he leaves practically untouched by claiming that it simply falls outside of his 'categorical' commitment.

Nevertheless, van Buren's improvement on Hare's blik on the objectivity of religious assertion is an ingenious one. And his order of reference to Ramsey, Miles and Braithwaite, respectively, shows his grasp of the nature of the problem.

⁶⁸ Woelfel, p. 64.

⁶⁹ Woelfel, p. 64.

⁷⁰ van Buren, p. 103.

Having now established the basic apologia of religious assertion in Hare's blik concept, van Buren argues that Ian T. Ramsey offers "support for and further elaboration of Hare's concept of a 'blik!'"⁷¹ In van Buren's paraphrase:

(Ramsey) argues that the language of faith combines the language of discernment, of an admittedly special sort, with the language of commitment, of a sort which covers the totality of life and the world. Statements of faith direct our attention to certain kinds of situations: situations of disclosure, when "the light dawns", and the situation becomes alive and new. The emphasis is not only on the disclosure or discernment, but also on the resulting commitment, whereby what we now "see" becomes important and determines our subsequent seeing. In such situations, the believer makes use of odd words like "God".⁷²

The function of such a word as 'God' then may be clarified with the idea of models and qualifiers to assist our discernment-commitment perspective. In van Buren's paraphrase, Ian Ramsey's concept of models and qualifiers runs as follows:

The model of "father", for example, points in a certain direction, inviting us to follow this direction. But it is qualified by such words as "eternal" or "omnipotent", to indicate that the word is only a model, that we should push on and on and on ...until the light dawns, and the situation, and, with it, all things, takes on "depth", or rather, until we see that the "depth" is there to be discerned....(Thus) the language of faith is nothing if not odd....⁷³

Such an experience of 'depth', Ramsey would argue, is not simply a "purely subjective" one, for there is no such thing

⁷¹ van Buren, p. 87.

⁷² van Buren, p. 87.

⁷³ van Buren, pp. 87-88.

as a purely subjective experience. "Every experience is an experience of something."⁷⁴ Take an example in the story of the resurrection of Jesus. What the Christian believes about the resurrection of Jesus has something to do with such observable facts as an empty tomb and a resuscitated body. The empirical evidence is indeed relevant, for it is the very fact that brings out our discernment-commitment response. But, a man is not a believer when he simply acknowledges the resurrection by the observable data. Rather, our discernment-commitment response arises when the empirical evidences and/or the word 'resurrection' (like the words 'duty', 'love', and 'God') directs us to the sort of situation in which a discernment fundamental to our whole conception of life and a response of commitment may take place." "Such situations exceed empirical description, however relevant description may be to our discernment."⁷⁵ van Buren continues in his interpretation of Ian Ramsey:

Preaching and the celebration of the Lord's Supper are obviously intended to evoke such a situation. The object and occasion of disclosure is the man Jesus, and the disclosure comes (if it does come) when "the light dawns" and we find ourselves involved in what existentialists would call an "encounter".⁷⁶

Thus, when Ian Ramsey's analysis is applied to the language of Christology, "it discloses two sorts of languages: one is

⁷⁴ van Buren, p. 88.

⁷⁵ van Buren, p. 89.

⁷⁶ van Buren, p. 90.

the language of a 'blik'; the other is that of straight-forward empirical observation."

Both sorts of language are used about the same person, Jesus of Nazareth. But the language of Christology is appropriate only to one who himself has discerned what Christians discern, for whom Jesus has become the occasion for a new discernment which has led to a commitment involving his whole perspective.⁷⁷

The odd nature of religious language is designed precisely in order to bring out such 'appropriateness' of religious response. Ramsey states, "Let me emphasize that hypostasis would only be successful in unifying two languages if it is odd enough never to be given except by reference to a Christian disclosure situation."⁷⁸

There is no question that Ian Ramsey's theory is one of the key factors in van Buren's theory. van Buren's fundamental model is essentially that of Richard Hare's blik argument. But, as he himself states, Ramsey "has made in effect a further development of Hare's concept of 'blik'." Ramsey "argues that the language of faith combines the language of discernment, of an admittedly special sort, with the language of commitment, of a sort which covers the totality of life and the world."⁸⁰ This "further development" from Hare's blik language, however, is indeed a long leap. Hare's blik defense of religious language is essentially built upon the

⁷⁷ van Buren, p. 91.
⁷⁸ Ramsey, Religious Language, p. 166 ff, quoted by van Buren, pp. 90-91.
⁷⁹ van Buren, p. 91.
⁸⁰ van Buren, p. 87.

denial of the traditional premise of natural theology. The upshot of such a position, for instance, has been voiced by Alasdair C. MacIntyre:

Theologians often behave as if their natural allies in philosophy were to be found among the metaphysicians, their natural enemies among the more sceptical and positivistic. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Metaphysics might also be described as a sustained attempt to replace conversion by argument. And to do this would be, as we have seen, entirely destructive of religion. The metaphysician conceives of philosophy as able to construct a set of ultimate beliefs: in so doing he makes the philosopher the rival of the theologian. ... The positivist by contrast shows the impossibility of what the metaphysician seeks to do by exhibiting the fallacies involved in all metaphysical argument. In so doing he leaves open the possibility of exhibiting religious belief in its own terms... religion must not attempt dependence on any philosophy. Belief cannot argue with unbelief: it can only preach to it.⁸¹

Ramsey, in fact, strikes a similar tone when he says, "Need we trouble if we discover that a whole heap of metaphysical furniture...which some might have supposed to be indispensable, has in fact belonged only to a confusing dream?"⁸² But, then, if we should define "metaphysics" as a system that allows men's inspiration to reach at "the deepest levels of thought and imagination", and not a closed-in system of super-mathematics, Ramsey is indeed a "pivotal"

81 Alasdair C. MacIntyre, "The Logical Status of Religious Belief", A.C. MacIntyre, ed., Metaphysical Beliefs: Three Essays, London, 1957, pp. 210-211.

82 Ian T. Ramsey, Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases, London, 1957, p. 185.

figure who looks "backward toward the 'non-metaphysical' response with confident mastery of the problem of religious language and forward toward a 'metaphysical' response with caution and hesitancy."⁸⁴ In Ramsey's thesis, discernment occurs when one's awareness of a situation is not exhausted by empirical designation; it occurs when the impersonality of observable facts clicks into awareness of person. And when it occurs, the situation before him takes on a new dimension, the "ice breaks", and the "light dawns". Thus "religious discernment is a disclosure which can take place both through 'personal' and 'impersonal' encounters."⁸⁵ This distinct 'personalism' in Ramsey, then, is directed toward the possible understanding of the total picture of the world which we would wish to indicate when we speak of the Christian faith. The key is the pronoun "I".

...does not the way in which distinctively personal situations parallel those which are characteristic-ally religious, suggest close logical kinship between "I" and "God"? Both, by the standards of observational language, are odd in their logical behaviour. ... Plainly "I" is in part tractable in observational language--what "I" refers to is not something entirely independent of our public behaviour. On the other hand, it can be argued... that "I" can never be exhausted by such language.⁸⁶

And as van Buren interprets Ramsey's thesis, the odd behaviour of "I" points to something that is total.

⁸⁴ Woelfel, p. 97.

⁸⁵ Woelfel, p. 106.

⁸⁶ Ramsey, p. 38.

The series of "whys" of any decision, any case of loyalty or commitment, must finally come to rest at the "logical stop-card": "I'm I." The word "God" also, Ramsey says, functions as the tautology "I'm I," and it is just this statement, "I am who I am," which stands in place of the revealed name in chapter 3 of Exodus. This tautology marks the limit which religious language approaches and to which it tries to point.⁸⁷

Ramsey's theory of significant tautology by no means destroys Hare's concept of blik, for significant tautologies are defined as

tautologies whose function is to commend those key words--those ultimates of explanation--which... arise in connection with religious language, and especially with its character as a commitment.⁸⁸

By introducing Ian Ramsey into his thesis, van Buren has accomplished a two-fold gain. One is, of course, that he has thus preserved Hare's blik concept. The other is that he has opened the way to probe into history, into the problem of how blik arises and how to account for it in the context of history. For the study of history, he introduces R.G.Collingwood, stating that Collingwood's definition of history "does not have room for language about transempirical entities such as angels, but it will allow us to speak"... of "human self-knowledge."⁸⁹ But as we shall readily see, the metaphysical outlook between Ian Ramsey and R.G.Collingwood is strikingly similar. In his exegetical work, van

⁸⁷ van Buren, p. 88.

⁸⁸ Ramsey, p. 40.

⁸⁹ van Buren, p. 110.

Buren, it may be said, simply pushes Ramsey's model to its logical conclusion. But to do so, van Buren certainly needed some "authentic" historian's theory of history. And van Buren's ingenuity is perhaps nowhere else so apparent than in conjoining Ramsey and Collingwood.

According to R.G.Collingwood, "history is a kind of thinking whereby absolutely cogent inferences about the past are drawn from interpretation of the evidence it has left behind."⁹⁰ In other words, history is "the attempt to find out what absolute presuppositions have been made by this or that person or group of occasions, in the course of this or that piece of thinking."⁹¹ Now, "if a given person in a given piece of thinking makes the absolute presupposition which can no more be deduced from the rest than waistcoat can be deduced from trousers or from trousers and coat together..." But taken together, "the constellation forms a single historical fact."⁹² And, as Collingwood claims, the metaphysician's business, when he has identified several different constellations of absolute presuppositions, is "not only to study their likenesses and unlikenesses but also to find out on what occasions and by what processes one of them has turned into another."⁹³ Thus, the way to

⁹⁰ Collingwood, p. 90.

⁹¹ Collingwood, p. 47.

⁹² Collingwood, p.67.

⁹³ Collingwood, p. 73.

account for the spread of a religious faith, a blik, is wide open before our eyes within Collingwood's system of metaphysics.

Collingwood's theory of metaphysics as the historical science is due to his concept of science itself. According to Collingwood, there are two kinds of sciences: pre-Baconian and post Baconian. In the pre-Baconian science, "the first stage is to observe facts and the second stage is to ask what, if anything, they prove. "The kind of science which Bacon described and all 'modern scientists' have practiced is "the kind of science in which the first stage is to ask a question and the second stage is to get it answered."⁹⁴ Now, for our interest, Collingwood stated the above distinction because of his belief that the whole positivist movement is rooted in what he termed 'pre-Baconian' type of thinking, hence, un-scientific in the modern sense of the word. And Collingwood's analysis serves nicely in attaining from historical data conclusions which are perhaps more than "historical". If the science of history simply purports to be 'objective' on the accumulation of data, it can never really hope to bring us any intimation about the prodedure of human life; it can tell us something about regular patterns, but no more. The reason is, of course, that an empirical description is essentially incomplete.

⁹⁴ Collingwood, p. 278.

One can "never exhaust all the details nor foresee all possible circumstances" which would make him modify or retract his statement."⁹⁵ This was already seen by Leibniz, as Waismann points out, "when he said that anything actual is always inexhaustible in its properties and a true image of the Infinite Mind."⁹⁶ The "probable", states M.C.D'Arcy, "cannot generate the quite different kind of knowledge which is truth, nor even can addition of evidence of itself be the cause of such a change."⁹⁷ By the very inclination of our minds, according to Bergson, we tend to capture the reality in discrete elements, while in truth "the real, the experienced, and the concrete are recognized by the fact that they are variability itself."⁹⁸ There are "no means", argued Bergson, of "reconstructing the mobility of the real with fixed concepts."⁹⁹ We have no way to succeed to reconstruct the reality simply by accumulating observable data. To put it differently, one cannot add together probabilities so as to make up a sum called a certainty. "Quantity is not sufficient."¹⁰⁰ But then, from the point of view of "post-Paçonian" science, "we learn by co-ordinating facts, fitting them into what we already have come to be-

⁹⁵ Waismann, p. 122.

⁹⁶ Waismann, p. 122.

⁹⁷ M.C.D'Arcy, S.J., The Meaning and Matter of History, New York, 1961, p. 53.

⁹⁸ Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, tr. by T. E. Hulme, London, 1912, p. 47.

⁹⁹ Bergson, p. 68.

¹⁰⁰ D'Arcy, p. 53.

lieve. Facts complement each other and take hold of others so that what is chaotic and dim comes into the light in terms of complex wholes and unities."¹⁰¹

One item added and, lo and behold, our doubt has disappeared. That item was the missing link, and when we use the word "link", we give the clue to the right answer and to the importance of the "illative" sense, or what more safely may be called "interpretation."¹⁰²

An acquiring of historical knowledge (Collingwood), "intuition" (Bergson), or still "discernment" (Ian Ramsey),-- whatever we may call it, they all point to some sort of leap that comes to a man when he sees the observable data, somehow looking for an answer for which his heart yearns. He has grasped the "reasons of the heart which reason cannot comprehend."¹⁰³

"One of the peculiarities of Collingwood's view", D'Arcy argues, "is that in reliving the past we relive only its thoughts and **by reliving** he means rethinking." In so far "as past human behavior" was an expression of thought it could be made present to us now by our rethinking it."¹⁰⁴ Such a tendency for the primacy of human "intellect" is certainly observable in Bergson and presumably in Ian Ramsey as well. Perhaps the deep chasm between the observable

¹⁰¹ D'Arcy, p. 56.

¹⁰² D'Arcy, p. 53.

¹⁰³ Blaise Pascal, Pensées, Selection 277; as quoted by Tillich, p. 77.

¹⁰⁴ D'Arcy, p. 29.

data and the beyond can only be overcome by such a basic trust in human 'intellect' for its capacity of making a "metaphysical leap."

Inasmuch as van Buren's work is taken upon the work of Collingwood and Ian Ramsey, we shall be mistaken if we should consider The Secular Meaning of the Gospel an attempt at setting forth an anti-metaphysical Christianity. For it is only in Collingwood's and Ian Ramsey's "metaphysical leap" that van Buren succeeds in accounting for the paradox in the faith-and-history relationship. Christian faith, on the one hand, "was not, and is not, a direct result of seeing Jesus as a historical figure."¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, "Christian faith is based on history."¹⁰⁶ Both Ramsey's theory of religious language and Collingwood's theory of history allow that, and in fact are geared toward it on the balance of observable data and the discernment of the truth. We must keep in mind that in one sense van Buren operates in the sphere which is not "secular" in the positivistic, or what Collingwood termed as pre-Baconian, sense of the word. As van Buren himself admits:

...then we must admit that we too are not being simply descriptive when we call the world and ourselves "secular." We are saying that it is possible today to be agnostic about "otherworldly" powers

¹⁰⁵ van Buren, p. 125.

¹⁰⁶ van Buren, p. 126.

and beings, but that people matter, that we live in a world in which "I" is not "you" and neither is completely assimilable to "it" or even to "he!" We are urging that Buber's distinction matters more than distinctions between eternity and time, infinity and finite, and many other distinctions that mattered to Christians in another age. It is this difference between us and our ancestors to which we wish to call attention when we speak of secular Christianity.¹⁰⁷

It is, then, in such a "metaphysical" structure that van Buren takes to himself the analysis of the New Testament language, of the dynamics of faith that originated in Jesus of Nazareth.

"Jesus of Nazareth was a singular individual."¹⁰⁸ As van Buren sees, this characteristic is recorded in the remembered parables, sayings, incidents and in the way in which the early Christian community spoke of him. "The evangelists themselves indicate this freedom in many ways: they speak, for example, of his 'authority,' or they point to his openness to friend and foe."¹⁰⁹ Jesus was able to say, "You have heard that it was said to them of old,...but I say to you..." "He simply spoke and acted with the authority of a singular freedom."¹¹⁰ In short, he was free in his own life, free from anxiety, free from the need to establish his own identity, and above all, free for his neighbor. And he "attracted

¹⁰⁷ van Buren, p. 195.

¹⁰⁸ van Buren, p. 121.

¹⁰⁹ van Buren, p. 121.

¹¹⁰ van Buren, p. 122.

followers and created enemies according to the dynamics of personality and in a manner comparable to the effect of other liberated persons in history upon people about them."¹¹¹ And he died "as a result of the threat that such a free man poses for insecure and bound men." Free as he may have been, however, Jesus did not produce in his disciples enough freedom to survive the events of the Passion Narrative: "there were no Christians before Easter." "However great personal sacrifices the disciples may have made for the sake of their discipleship, however much they may have loved and trusted Jesus, the fact remains that not one of them remained loyal when he was arrested."¹¹² On the other side of Easter, however, we see the disciples as changed men. Something happened. "They apparently found themselves caught up in something like the freedom of Jesus himself, having become men who were free to face even death without fear."¹¹³ Peter expressed this "something" by saying, "*The Lord appeared to me.*" As van Buren suggests, the statement 'He appeared to me', rather than 'I saw him', conveys "the objective character of the image 'on the mirror of his mind'."¹¹⁴ This language of faith indicates that something has happened to the believers, rather than that they have done something

¹¹¹ van Buren, p. 134.

¹¹² van Buren, p. 125.

¹¹³ van Buren, p. 128.

¹¹⁴ van Buren, p. 129.

themselves. This was a discernment situation in which Jesus, the free man whom they had known, was seen in a quite new way.

The experience of Peter and the others on Easter was certainly their own "subjective" experience. But it was an experience of Jesus and his freedom in a way which was quite new for them. ... We might say that, on Easter, the freedom of Jesus began to be contagious.¹¹⁵

Thus, the Gospel is "not merely about a free man; it is the good news of a free man who has set other men free, first proclaimed by those to whom this had happened."

As it has happened again and again during nineteen centuries that, in the context of hearing this apostolic proclamation, men have been liberated. Their response, which the New Testament calls "faith," consists in acknowledging that this has happened by accepting the liberator, Jesus of Nazareth, as the man who defines for them what it means to be a man and as the point of orientation for their lives. They are "in Christ," which is to say that their understanding of themselves and their lives and all things is determined by their understanding of Jesus.¹¹⁶

And that "point of orientation" was selected, so far as the believers themselves were concerned, not by themselves, but as a blik by which the believers were "grasped" and "held."

The perspective of faith was spoken of as a response "drawn from" the believer. The language of the Gospel implies consistently that faith is "given," that the believer cannot and does not want to take any credit for it.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ van Buren, p. 133.

¹¹⁶ van Buren, p. 138.

¹¹⁷ van Buren, p. 140.

A man's faith is "subjective" in that it is his blik, his own act and response; "it is a historical perspective which he holds."¹¹⁸ Every experience is subjective, by definition." But his faith is "objective" in that it is not his own invention. An experience is "always an experience of something"--also "by definition";¹¹⁹ that a particular blik has grasped him and held him. This is a paradox which "finds classic expression in the words of Paul: 'I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me!'"¹²⁰ Thus, in van Buren's thesis, the question of 'objectivity' of religious assertion is beautifully overcome. Now, how about 'universality'?

van Buren refers to the fact that "the language of the Gospel contains not only exclusive claims; it has a universal aspect also." "It claims that in the history of Jesus of Nazareth something universal, eternal, absolute, something it calls 'God' was manifested." The earliest and most basic formula of faith in Christian tradition is the confession "Jesus is Lord." "This confession is held to be valid regardless of circumstances."¹²¹ However, van Buren does not really have much more to say about the universality of Christianity.

¹¹⁸ van Buren, p. 141.

¹¹⁹ van Buren, p. 133.

¹²⁰ see van Buren, p. 141.

¹²¹ van Buren, p. 139.

The Gospel asserts that Jesus is Lord of the whole world. This means that the freedom for which the Christian has been set free allows him to see the whole world in its light. When the Christian says, that Jesus' Lordship is not limited to the church, he is saying that he understands all free men, regardless of where they may say they have found their freedom, as having "caught" their freedom from the same source as he.¹²²

Beyond that assertion, however, van Buren simply agrees with Hare in saying that "there is no arguing about 'blik's'." In fact, he frankly states: "Christians have never been able... (and when they were at their best have not tried), to prove the 'superiority' of their historical perspective over other perspectives. Claims of 'finality' are simply the language appropriate to articulating a historical perspective."¹²³ However, the point at issue is not only the matter of 'superiority' in a sense of competition. It is a matter of universality' of Christianity, of the relationship between Christianity and other religions.

The fact is that, according to the system utilized by van Buren, there is actually no way to account for the universality of Christianity. Ian Ramsey's theory of significant tautology accounts for the total from the point of view of "I". But he himself said in his Religious Language, "I am not discussing how we would justifiably prefer one mapping of a religious situation to a rival portrayal."¹²⁴

¹²² van Buren, p. 142.

¹²³ van Buren, p. 155.

¹²⁴ Ian Ramsey, pp. 25-26.

Collingwood's concept of an "absolute presupposition" is that it is "one which stands, relatively to all questions to which it is related, as a presupposition, never as an answer."¹²⁵ The ground of operation of such a concept is individualistic, and as such the concept of absolute presuppositions itself cannot justify preferring one mapping of an absolute presupposition to a rival one either. Thus, what happens to a Christian could conceivably happen to the disciples of Socrates or of anybody else. What happens is simply a kind of transmission of a contagious blik from one person to the other, from one generation to the other generation. That is the extent of Collingwood's and Ian Ramsey's metaphysics, and hence, van Buren's own thesis. Beyond that stage, about the question of the universality of one blik over the other, they can only say that there is no arguing about absolute presuppositions, about "I", or about bliks.

Van Buren's way out of this apologetical strain is to confine himself simply to addressing his thoughts to the people inside of the Christian Church. The question of universality certainly does not take any dogmatic strain, then. And this falls nicely in with his scheme of "categorical commitment" to secularism. As he puts it, his work has arisen out of "certain acknowledged commitments" to what he calls "secular thought," which is grounded "in empirical attitudes"¹²⁵ Collingwood, p. 31.

in some way."¹²⁶ The picture than van Buren claims to have in mind is of the "Christian, himself a secular man, who realizes that the juxtaposition of his faith, expressed in traditional terms, and his ordinary thinking, causes a spiritual schizophrenia."¹²⁷ Thus, the chief benefactor of van Buren's work is admittedly the "empirically-minded man who has been touched by the Gospel and who seeks a meaning and a logic to being a Christian in the world today."¹²⁸ As Ludwig Wittgenstein has said, "The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known."¹²⁹

van Buren's work is self-defeating on two accounts, however. One is that, in his own claim of using the Wittgensteinian principle, van Buren's work is simply that of explanation and clarification of how the language of faith functions, and as such it is not geared toward "preaching." But, the work is put forth as a "conversation 'from faith to faith! "

The "secular" world is not of one mind or even at all clear about the way its thought is or should be grounded empirically. To develop an interpretation of the Gospel on the basis of certain empirical attitudes, therefore, hardly serves an apologetic interest in making the Gospel understandable

¹²⁶ van Buren, p. 83.

¹²⁷ van Buren, p. 77.

¹²⁸ van Buren, p. 192.

¹²⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigation, tr. by G.E.M. Anscombe, New York, 1963, p. 47.

or more available to contemporary "unbelievers."¹³⁰
Since it cannot hope to serve an apologetic interest, "it
can only serve the purpose of faith seeking understanding."

If other "believers" find that they too are struck
by and committed to that which the author finds
compelling in "secularism," they may also find this
study helpful in seeking understanding.¹³¹

But, it is contradictory, for he has denied the merit of
explaining religious assertion by adhering to Hare's concept
of blik. True, van Buren committed himself to addressing on-
ly those already inside the Christian Church, where faith-to-
faith conversation is perhaps fruitful as one's faith is al-
ready established. It is said that when Anselm was shown
that his ontological proof of the existence of God proved
the existence of God only to a person who already believed
it, he replied that he did not care. Is van Buren operating
under the same outlook? Perhaps so. But the problem is that
we cannot really draw a clear-cut distinction between so-
called "believers" and "non-believers." Many sincere Christ-
ians today really "do not know what to do with the word
'God' nor can use it except in a way entirely different
from the 'orthodox' way of the early centuries of Christian-
ity."¹³²

¹³⁰ van Buren, p. 20.

¹³¹ van Buren, p. 20.

¹³² van Buren, p. 103.

A large number of people today can only be called Christian agnostics; many a person is immersed in Christian "parable" but not in commitment. No, the distinction between the believers and non-believers is by no means clear-cut. From Hare's point of view and from MacIntyre's one cannot argue but only preach for his faith. As van Buren himself has endeavoured to illustrate, "the meaning of the Gospel is its use on the lips of those who proclaim it."¹³³ To seek out the believers and explain what Christianity is all about in our secular age is self-contradictory from the point of blik language, dishonest from the point of faith-to-faith conversation, and futile in regard to the situation of our world today.

Another problem is due to van Buren's basic adherence to the view that man's weltanschauung is essentially transient. His quest after the meaning of the Gospel has stemmed from his "categorical" commitment to modern secularism. What this means is obviously that van Buren operates within the Bultmannian metaphysical presupposition, namely, a) man is conditioned in his weltanschauung by his place in history; b) he can nevertheless express the kerygma, the message of the ever present and never changing Truth, through the media of his "affected" language; and c) the task of a Christian theologian is to discover that Truth and to present it to his age in such a way that people can see that 133 van Buren, p. 155.

the Kerygma corresponds to a real experience in human life at any time, in spite of the mythology through which the Kerygma is expressed.¹³⁴ It was only in that metaphysical outlook that Bultmann could say:

The only honest way of reciting the creeds is to strip the mythological framework from the truth they enshrine - that is assuming that they contain any truth at all, which is just the question that theology has to ask.¹³⁵

van Buren's program, also, is inconceivable outside of such a metaphysical framework. But now, as Bishop Robinson reminds us:

to demythologize-as Bultmann would readily concede is not to suppose that we can dispense with all myth or symbol. It is to cut our dependence upon one particular mythology - of what Tillich calls the 'superworld of divine objects' - which is in peril of becoming a source of incredulity rather than an aid to faith.

What such a metaphysics forces us to accept is that we need to look into two directions: the never changing Gospel and our transient weltanschauung represented through our human language. Indeed, "the answer to any question presupposes whatever the question presupposes."¹³⁷ van Buren, however, committing himself categorically to the "secular" language, deliberately looks only to one direction, i.e., the

¹³⁴ see Kerygma and Myth, Hans Werner Bartsch, ed., tr. by R.H. Fuller, New York, 1961, pp. 104-105.

¹³⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", Kerygma and Myth, Hans Werner Bartsch, ed., p.4.

¹³⁶ Robinson, p. 132.

¹³⁷ Collingwood, p. 63.

the sphere of Man-Statement (as opposed to the sphere of God-Statement). And here, he is taking a positivistic stand.¹³⁸ And by restricting himself only within Man-Statement, he really contradicts his own metaphysical outlook. On one hand he concedes to the view that man's weltanschauung is transient, and on the other he attempts to establish his thesis as if our present weltanschauung in secularism is the only thing there is. And this is precisely the deep cause for his inability, and for the inability of all blik arguments, to account for the universality of Christianity.

The fact is that, as Flew rightly pointed out, any kind of assertion about Christian faith must necessarily account, if indeed it purports to be faithful to its own claim, for the universality and objectivity of the Christian message. In Tillich's statement: "it is the task of apologetic theology to prove that the Christian claim also has validity from the point of view of those outside the theological circle."

Apologetic theology must show that trends which are immanent in all religions and cultures move toward the Christian answer.¹³⁹

In other words, Christian theology must necessarily imply "the claim that it is the theology."¹⁴⁰ The system which

138 Compare, for instance, the first criticism made against the positivist's stand, pp. 15-16 of this thesis.

139 Tillich, p. 15.

140 Tillich, p. 16.

van Buren applies to himself, however, simply cannot cope with the problem that Tillich reminds us of. Of course, one can argue that van Buren is here an exegete and not a theologian. But, such a dichotomy breaks down when we remember that van Buren's basic motive is to accomplish Bonhoeffer's unfinished task. It is at this point that van Buren resorts to T.R.Miles' theory of qualified silence.

T.R.Miles claims that 'God' as such cannot be described as existing, intervening, or empirically verifiable. "Before such questions as whether there is some absolute being, even 'Being itself', which is 'behind' or 'beyond' all we know and are, some final 'ground and end of all created things,'" the believer will be wise to remain silent.¹⁴¹ The believer, however, is the man "who has chosen to qualify his silence with the theistic parable, like the one expressed in the doctrine of the creation of the world by a loving Father."¹⁴² Most of all, "what he has to tell is the history of Jesus and the strange story of how his freedom became contagious on Easter."¹⁴³ And "undoubtedly Jesus believed he was obeying some 'one', whom he called 'Father', but the Gospel of John, as well as the logic of language, forces us to silence before all questions concerning that 'one.' "

¹⁴¹ van Buren, p. 144.

¹⁴² van Buren, p. 92.

¹⁴³ van Buren, p. 144.

We can only follow the recommendation of the evangelist to look at Jesus himself; questions about "God" will receive their only useful answer in the form of the history of that man.¹⁴⁴

And, finally, van Buren refers to R.B.Braithwaite who has taken "religious statements to be assertions of intention to act in a certain way, together with the entertainment of certain stories."¹⁴⁵ The merit of Braithwaite to van Buren, then, is two fold. One is his thesis that "religious assertions are in fact used as moral assertions."¹⁴⁶ Neither religious nor moral assertions are logically necessary nor empirical in nature; "yet they have a use: that of guiding conduct."¹⁴⁷ The other is Braithwaite's thesis on the entertainment of certain stories. As van Buren elaborates on this point, "in order to live in the 'freedom for which Christ has set us free,' we need to 'entertain' again and again that piece of history, for it does not just provide an encouragement to walk in the way of freedom; it is the context in which the light dawns anew and in which that freedom proves again to be contagious for us."¹⁴⁸ Braithwaite's original contribution to Hare's blik is mainly on this one point: "a religious assertion will...have a propositional element which is lacking in a purely moral asser-

144 van Buren, p. 148.

145 van Buren, p. 145.

146 van Buren, p. 93.

147 van Buren, p. 93.

148 van Buren, p. 145.

tion, in that it will refer to a story as well as to an intention."¹⁴⁹ Even so, however, the empirical truth of the stories "is not the proper criterion for deciding whether or not an assertion is a Christian one."¹⁵⁰ Braithwaite, then, contributes a great deal to van Buren's central thesis that Christian ethics and Christian theology are one. Braithwaite states:

The view which I put forward for your consideration is that the intention of a Christian to follow a Christian way of life is not only the criterion for the sincerity of his belief in the assertions of Christianity; it is the criterion for the meaningfulness of his assertions. Just as the meaning of a moral assertion is given by its use in expressing the asserter's intention to act, so far as in him lies, in accordance with the moral principle involved, so the meaning of a religious assertion is given by its use in expressing the asserter's intention to follow a specified policy of behaviour.¹⁵¹

Here is no "metaphysical leap" from Hare's position as we saw in Ramsey, ~~for~~, the basic line of contention in Braithwaite is just the same as that of Hare. Hare said that "ethics was the ~~exa~~ct study of the words one used in making moral judgments, and that judgment, to be moral, had to be both universal and prescriptive."¹⁵² In Hare's sense, (and in Braithwaite's sense also) ethics has to be both universal

149 van Buren, p. 95.

150 R.B. Braithwaite, An Empiricist's View of Religious Belief, Cambridge, 1955, p.26; as quoted by van Buren, p. 95.

151 Braithwaite, pp. 15f; as quoted by van Buren, p. 94.

152 Ved Mehta, "Onward and Upward with the Arts: A Battle Against the Bewitchment of Our Intelligence," The New Yorker, Dec. 9, 1961, p.106.

and prescriptive, precisely because we "cannot answer 'ought'-questions by disguising them as 'is'-questions."¹⁵³ The whole code of ethics is established on the agreement that when we say "X ought to do Y," we mean that if we were in X's position, we ought to do Y also. But, of course, the Hare-Braithwaite line of argument brings us right back to the second point in Flew's criticism of Hare's blik. Hare's and Braitwaite's ethics is universal and prescriptive, but without any rational apologetics behind their specific choice of a blik. Apparently, however, van Buren felt able to return to Hare's basic line of thought, after having presented Ian Ramsey and T.R.Miles to supplement Hare's "weakness."

The great merit in Hare's and Braitwaite's blik argument (and, hence, van Buren's own thesis), however, is that it illuminates with indisputable force the importance of Christian living. Indeed, a good tree is known by its fruit. As Tillich puts it:

We transform reality according to the way we see it, and we see reality according to the way we transform it. Grasping and shaping the world are interdependent. In the cognitive realm this has been clearly expressed in the Fourth Gospel, which speaks of knowing the truth by doing the truth. Only in the active realization of the true does truth become manifest.¹⁵⁴

In that sense, the outcome of van Buren's analysis of theo-

¹⁵³ Ved Mehta, p. 106.

¹⁵⁴ Tillich, p. 76.

logical language ought to be welcomed in that it has expressed with "clarity and force the unity of ethics and theology."¹⁵⁵ But, when it takes the form (as it does in van Buren's thesis) of an either-or question: "what is the real issue in Christian faith: Jesus or God, Christology or Theology?,"¹⁵⁶ one rightly begins to wonder if it has not gone too far. van Buren refers to the Hare-Braithwaite line of analysis by saying, "Christologically speaking, these interpretations imply holding to the humanity of Christ, to the man Jesus of Nazareth, and letting the issue of his divinity fall where it may."¹⁵⁷ van Buren admits that that statement is "an exaggeration!" But, it is not, in fact, an exaggeration in his thesis as a whole. van Buren states:

The decision to interpret the Gospel as a secular Christology, however, raises an obvious question: Although traditional theology does have a historical, intentional, and ethical dimension, does it not include a good deal more? Where ... is the transcendent God of classical Christianity? Have we not reduced theology to ethics? Our answer takes the form of another question: In a secular age, what would that "more" be? It is our inability to find any empirical linguistic anchorage for that "more" that has led to our interpretation.¹⁵⁸

"Wherever technical reason dominates," Tillich has stated, "religion is superstition and is either foolishly supported by reason or rightly removed by it."¹⁵⁹ In a sense,

¹⁵⁵ van Buren, p. 102.

¹⁵⁶ van Buren, p. 103.

¹⁵⁷ van Buren, p. 102.

¹⁵⁸ van Buren, p. 197-198.

¹⁵⁹ Tillich, p. 74.

the pitfall of van Buren's thesis is well attested to by Dr. Owen Thomas' reported comment: "van Buren claims that there is no God and that Jesus is His Son."

Dr. Thomas' comment incidentally brings out one merit of van Buren's thesis. That is, van Buren has "tried to follow" the path provided by Hare, Ramsey, Miles and Braithwaite "consistently without resorting to a use of words of which" he can give no logical account.¹⁶⁰ If, as a consequence, the conclusion is unacceptable, we can then expose the exact source of its inadequacy, and hope to develop a better model for ourselves. "Obscure and intuition-bound notions can neither lead to absurd conclusions nor provide new and correct ones, and hence they fail to be useful in two important respects."¹⁶¹ We can at least see through the threads of van Buren's argument and the cause for his reaching his conclusion, and such is indeed "none too common an occurrence."¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ van Buren, p. 195.

¹⁶¹ Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structure*, 's-Gravenhage, 1957, p. 5.

¹⁶² From the appraisal of John Hick on van Buren's work, as quoted on the jacket of van Buren's book.

Chapter two: van Buren's Indebtedness to

Ludwig Wittgenstein

In van Buren's assertion, Wittgenstein's formula: "the meaning of a word is its use in the language"¹⁶³ and its supporting argument¹⁶⁴ are fundamental to his whole approach.¹⁶⁵ We shall now examine the above claim of van Buren under three headings: 1) the relationship between words and things; 2) van Buren's theoretical ground for the problem-solving procedure; and 3) the problem of the verification principle.

1) Words and Things

van Buren states, "the word 'God' has been avoided because it equivocates and misleads. It seems to be a proper name, calling up the image of a divine entity, but it refuses to function as any other proper name does."¹⁶⁶

Making this statement, van Buren is really referring to the tradition of British empiricism started in Bishop Berkeley's concept of language. As G.J. Warnock recounts, the scientists of Berkeley's time were apt to lament their ignorance of the true nature of motion and force.

They felt that it was their business to discover, not that and how things were, but that one thing--

¹⁶³ Wittgenstein, # 43.

¹⁶⁴ Wittgenstein, #1-#43.

¹⁶⁵ van Buren, p. 16.

they hardly knew what sort of thing -- which really was Motion; they sought for that one mysterious stuff that was Force.¹⁶⁷

...it is thought that every name has, or ought to have, one only precise and settled signification, which inclines men to think there are certain abstract, determinate ideas which constitute the true and only immediate signification of each general name; and that it is by the mediation of these abstract ideas that a general name comes to signify any particular thing.¹⁶⁸

Berkeley considered that the confusion in our understanding of general names was caused by a "philosophically insidious way of lapsing into linguistic errors." The root of the problem, as Berkeley saw it, lay in our own wrong use of language: "we have first raised a dust and complain we cannot see."¹⁶⁹ Thus, he declared that we must banish metaphysics and recall men to common sense; the use of such phrases as 'corporeal substance' and 'external bodies' is not a symptom of absurd or mistaken empirical beliefs, but of theoretical confusion. Berkeley's own axiom was that "by observing how ideas become general, we may the better judge how words are made so."¹⁷⁰

In this connection, Kurt Goldstein's project with the language of aphasic patients has given further support to Berkeley's observation, pointing out that the essence of words resides in their generic value.

¹⁶⁷ G.J.Warnock, Berkeley, Baltimore, 1953, p. 84.

¹⁶⁸ George Berkeley, A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, (originally published in 1710), ed. by C.M.Turbayne, New York, 1957, p. 17.

¹⁶⁹ Berkeley, p. 17.

¹⁷⁰ Berkeley, p. 12.

In one of Goldstein's tests, an aphasic patient and a normal person are presented separately with a pile of skeins of yarn of different colors and requested to select all the red skeins, including the various shades of red. A normal person usually selects a great number of different shades of the same basic color. Clearly, his attention is directed to the basic color and he chooses all skeins which he recognizes as belonging to the given type.

When the test is given to a patient the results are different. In fact, several types of behavior are observed. For example,...the patient may choose only skeins of the identical or at least of almost the same shade. ... Another patient matches a given bright shade of red with a blue skein of great brightness.¹⁷¹

What happens is that the sense perception of the patient is not controlled by the power of abstract categorization of the word, 'red'. He is only directed by a sense perception of a concrete object at each time, now by the brightness of the color, and then by the redness of it, without the overall control of categorized conceptual abstraction. Now, the peculiar actions of an aphasic patient are not due to disturbance of recognition, but rather to outspoken incapacity to name objects, even the most familiar. For, the patient can indeed find words in connection with objects if he has such words which fit the concrete situation. "The patient who cannot apply the word red to different nuances of red

¹⁷¹ Kurt Goldstein, "The Nature of Language", Language: An Enquiry into Its Meaning and Function, R. Anshen, ed., NY, 1957, p.27.

produces easily such words as 'strawberry red' and 'sky blue', etc., in relation to corresponding colors. He can do it because he has such individual words at his command."¹⁷² The information that one can receive from such observation is revealing. For, it shows that the nature of naming "is not based on a simple association between a sound complex and an object but is an expression bound to the conceptual attitude."

Words used as names are not simply tools which may be handled like concrete objects but are means of detaching one from the sense experiences and of helping one to organize the world in a conceptual way.¹⁷³

What Goldstein's test suggests is that the meaning of a word is its use in the context of man's abstract attitude, in reference to a cognizance of objects. In that sense, Berkeley was certainly on the right track. when he said that general names are not the proper names of anything; there is no one entity that a general term signifies. In Warnock's appraisal of Berkeley,

Berkeley has seized on the enormously important point that to say that a word is general is not to say what sort of entity it names, but is rather to say how it is used in discourse about ordinary things.¹⁷⁴

This seems an obvious point, but, as Warnock points out, it has been overlooked startlingly often.

¹⁷² Goldstein, p. 24.

¹⁷³ Goldstein, p. 24.

¹⁷⁴ Warnock, p. 72.

Berkeley's insight finds its counterpart today in Ludwig Wittgenstein. According to Wittgenstein, each word in the language-game is not something that is represented, but is a means of representation.¹⁷⁵ Think of the standard-meter in Paris, Wittgenstein suggests. We think that because we can ask for the length of this or that piece of metal, we can also ask for the length of the standard-meter; but of course this is absurd because "length" as such precisely means being measured against the standard-meter. Consider the chess game, he suggests further. The question "Is this a good move with the King?" may be answered by reference to the rules of the game. But, the question, "Why does the King only move one square at a time?" cannot be answered, because it is precisely about that rule. One can only say: "That is how the King is moved in the game of chess." A word is a means of representation like the standard-meter in Paris and the rule of a chess game. It is, therefore, nonsensical to ask for an entity that a word may represent.

...to say "if it did not exist, it could have no name" is to say as much and as little as: if this thing did not exist, we could not use it in our language-game. -What looks as if it had to exist, is part of the language.¹⁷⁶

"The meaning of a word is its use in the language." This simple statement embodies a far-reaching significance.

¹⁷⁵ see Wittgenstein, p. 25. and,
For an explanation of "language-games" see p. 64 of this thesis.

¹⁷⁶ Wittgenstein, p. 25.

When philosophers use a word - "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name" - and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home? - What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.¹⁷⁷

Such a concept as 'reality must correspond' is a mere dogmatism from which we would wish to steer away.¹⁷⁸ Certainly, if we take heed to what Berkeley, Wittgenstein, and Goldstein have suggested, the word 'god' is not a proper name in the sense that it points to a particular thing or a particular person. Thus, van Buren, by following the axiom laid out by Berkeley and further by Wittgenstein, has been able to steer away from the age-old problem of the words-and-things relationship without getting into a metaphysical muddle in positing some necessary and independent reality that magically resides behind a general term.

2) van Buren's Theoretical Ground for Procedure

What is van Buren's theoretical basis which has enabled him to take the procedure he has? Theologically it is obviously due to his categorical commitment to modern secularism after the manner of Bonhoeffer. Since, today "in almost every field of human learning, the metaphysical and cosmological aspect has disappeared and the subject matter has been 'limited' to the human, the historical, the empirical,"¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Wittgenstein, p. 48.

¹⁷⁸ Wittgenstein, p. 51.

¹⁷⁹ van Buren, p. 198

he wishes to respond to it with the secular meaning of the Gospel, i.e. the story of a singular man of tremendous impact who has imparted contagious freedom to his followers, now for almost two thousand years after his death. "Linguistic analysis" itself is utilized by van Buren because it reflects the "empirical attitudes which appear to be characteristic of secular thought."¹⁸⁰

We note at the same time, however, a rather placid calmness in his whole approach. He considers his whole enterprise as "the clarification of which is involved in the Christian orientation, whether one accepts or rejects that answer."¹⁸¹ Such an outlook in van Buren undoubtedly came from Wittgenstein's philosophical outlook as expounded in Philosophical Investigation.

As Wittgenstein conceived it, philosophical problems, which are themselves "not empirical problems," are nevertheless solved "by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them."¹⁸²

The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ van Buren, p. 195.

¹⁸¹ van Buren, p. 192.

¹⁸² Wittgenstein, p. 47.

¹⁸³ Wittgenstein, p. 48.

Thus, "philosophy," in Wittgenstein's concept, "is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."¹⁸⁴ It is in this vein that van Buren claims himself to be a follower of Wittgenstein, ridding himself of the "cases of language cramps"¹⁸⁵ and setting himself the task of clarifying "the language of faith and of the Gospel."¹⁸⁶ van Buren would say much in the same way with Wittgenstein that his task is a battle against the bewitchment of our "theological-metaphysical jargon." In so far as he is following Wittgenstein's principle, the task of clarification is his sole purpose. For, once the investigation is made, "philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is."¹⁸⁷

Now, however, the difference comes. Wittgenstein was a tormented genius. Norman Malcolm, in his Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir, alluded to Wittgenstein as a man in a room who wants to get out but doesn't know how.

He tries the window but it is too high. He tries the chimney but it is too narrow. And if he would only turn around, he would see that the door has been open all the time!¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Wittgenstein, p. 47.

¹⁸⁵ van Buren, p. 16.

¹⁸⁶ van Buren, p. 192.

¹⁸⁷ Wittgenstein, p. 49.

¹⁸⁸ as quoted in Ved Mehta, p. 153.

Wittgenstein's dictum that 'philosophy leaves everything as it is' was a manifesto of his precision and never-ceasing quest for the status of philosophy. His philosophy was never meant to witness to God's bountiful command of the world. In this sense, the contrast between Berkeley and Wittgenstein is striking in spite of their resemblance in the manner of theoretical procedure. Berkeley believed that ordinary language, though not incorrect itself, conceals God through its conventional (and not really accurate) way of saying things. By saying that 'a fire makes the kettle boil.' we are apt to be blinded by our own expression from seeing a crucial point, i.e. that what we are really seeing is that 'kettles placed on hot fires invariably do boil, much in accordance with other facts about heat and water.' Only when we are really aware of what we are saying, Berkeley contended, could we understand the real cause of these phenomena. For, only then can we ask, What is it which really makes things happen as they do? -This must be something capable of deliberate and purposive action; it must be an animate being, a spirit.

And if we consider even for a moment the immeasurable power and wisdom required for making the entire universe proceed as it does, we shall see that the 'spirit' who makes all these things happen is and can only be God. In this way, (Berkeley) believes, we score over all atheists 'the most cheap and easy triumph in the world.'¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Warnock, p. 122.

Obviously Berkeley's apologetic enterprise was only tenable within the framework of his unquestioned assumption that events could not simply occur "unplanned, unthinking, unwilled."¹⁹⁰ Since that assumption has been gradually shattered in the general outlook of modern men, Berkeley's enterprise has sadly culminated in modern phenomenalism which may be properly termed as Berkeley without God.

A striking difference between Berkeley and Wittgenstein is not so much in the impact of their formula: the meaning of a word is its use in the language, as in their concepts of the purpose of philosophy. Berkeley's concern in philosophy was to banish atheism; Wittgenstein's, to leave everything as it is. Wittgenstein has stated:

It is the business of philosophy, not to resolve a contradiction by means of a mathematical or logico-mathematical discovery, but to make it possible for us to get a clear view of the state of mathematics that troubles us: the state of affairs before the contradiction is resolved.¹⁹¹

van Buren, then, falls short of his own declared affinity to Wittgenstein. After all, he does use his linguistic analysis in order to assert the secular meaning of the Gospel which deals (let us not fool ourselves) with the questions of Reality and of "God" which Wittgenstein excluded from his philosophy. In this sense, van Buren is closer to

¹⁹⁰ Warnock, p. 124.

¹⁹¹ Wittgenstein, p. 50.

Berkeley in his motive. To be sure, he maintains his Wittgensteinian stature by claiming that he puts forth his task of clarification simply as a faith-to-faith conversation and that the readers are free to take it or drop it. Perhaps in van Buren, there is no pose for "cheap victory" as Berkeley envisaged with his analysis. But the fact remains that van Buren departed from Wittgenstein's principle in his singular drive to answer to Bonhoeffer's quest for religionless Christianity.

3) The Problems of the Verification Principle

van Buren states, "the heart of the method of linguistic analysis lies in the use of the verification principle."¹⁹² Since his whole work hinges upon the validity of linguistic analysis, and the linguistic analysis in turn on the validity of his verification principle, what he means by verification principle is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, this is an area he is most vague about and perhaps most confused.

Also, one misleading factor in van Buren's work is that it gives an impression that there is such a thing as 'linguistic analysis' available for us ready made. But, as in Flew's comment, the truth is that it is "difficult" and even "ultimately misleading" to try to define a linguistic philosophy as such as a distinct school.¹⁹³ There is among the

¹⁹² van Buren, p. 104.

¹⁹³ Flew, "Philosophy and Language", Philosophical Quarterly, p. 21; as quoted by Ferré, p. 1.

so-called linguistic philosophers "not even so much as rudimentary agreement upon the consideration relevant to the construction of a satisfactory theory of language." Instead, "one finds a welter of specific disagreements on every question, in every quarter."¹⁹⁴ As van Buren rightly noted, "it is more accurate to speak of linguistic analysis as a method than a school or movement of philosophy, for what its practitioners share is only a common interest and a common logical method."¹⁹⁵ van Buren's comment on the linguistic analysts' sharing "a common logical method", however, is misleading. For, what is common to most of the analysts is not the actual procedure in method, but, as in Ferré's words, only the basic belief that:

Ordinary language is a subtle and sometimes misleading instrument; meanings are elusive, often hidden or confused by the language which seems to express logically acceptable propositions. ...Grammatically perfect sentences...may conceal logical unmeaning. However much linguistic philosophers may otherwise disagree, they are one in the conviction that there is likely to be something problem-causing about unanalyzed language which proper analysis can remove.¹⁹⁶

This is of course what Berkeley saw: the common use of language, in its concern for brevity, convenience, and intelligibility in the ordinary affairs of life, really does not

¹⁹⁴ Jerrold Katz and Jerry Fodor, "What's Wrong with the Philosophy of Language", Inquiry 5.197-237, 1962, p.197.
¹⁹⁵ van Buren; p. 14.
¹⁹⁶ Ferré , p.6.

bring out the precise nature of the facts to which we refer. Now, the verification principle in analytical philosophy has arisen precisely to give some kind of measure to that problem-causing something. As for the exact manner of how to go about it, however, there has been little agreement.

We have already seen the positivist's approach and van Buren's affinity to the positivist's procedure.¹⁹⁷ But, how does such an inclination of van Buren relate to Wittgenstein's approach? Wittgenstein himself abandoned in his Philosophical Investigation the positivist's premise that a logistic system can reflect the picture of Reality as such. And, having rejected the positivist's unquestioned metaphysical assumptions of logical atomism and copy theory, Wittgenstein suggested that an accurate description of the usage, meaning or extension of an expression could not in truth suggest a sharp, formalizable distinction, for, there were, in fact, only blurred edges. "Inexact" does not mean "unusable";¹⁹⁸ we need, nor can, do no more than make the distinction that exists in the language itself. Significant questions of meaning are thus attained in terms of relationships that exist in the use of individual words and expressions. As Wittgenstein saw, our language is like a panorama of manifold chess games; there is a rule to each "language-game" and we learn each one to play that game. Accordingly,

¹⁹⁷ see pp.11-17 of this thesis.

¹⁹⁸ see Wittgenstein, p. 41.

"there is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies."199

van Buren states:

The meaning of a statement is to be found in, and is identical with, the function of that statement. If a statement has a function, so that it may in principle be verified or falsified, the statement is meaningful, and unless or until a theological statement can be submitted in some way to verification, it cannot be said to have a meaning in our language-game.200

What does he mean by "verification"? He seems to imply that there is a method, called verification, to which a theological statement or any other statements can be submitted for the test. What is the criterion for such a principle, which "can help us to sort out the pieces of our language, lest we try to understand the language of love in terms of biology or the language of politics in terms of physics"²⁰¹? van Buren claims that Wittgenstein's philosophical principle in #1 - #43 of Philosophical Investigation is fundamental to his whole approach.²⁰² Does Wittgenstein's philosophy include the notion of the verification principle? At first sight, obviously no. But, as we probe into Wittgenstein's thesis we shall find that there are problematic seeds which invite one to adopt some sort of verification principle as indeed van Buren has done.

199 Wittgenstein, p. 51.

200 van Buren, pp. 104-105.

201 van Buren, p. 15.

202 van Buren, p. 16.

Wittgenstein admits that "methods" are necessary, though not "a method"; for, we do not command "a clear view of the use of our words." "Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity."²⁰³ Wittgenstein's attempt in Philosophical Investigation, therefore, is directed at establishing "an order" (though not "the order"),²⁰⁴ to straighten out "grammatical jokes" imbedded in our language.²⁰⁵

Once the "ostensive definition" of the word is attained within the context of a language-game by the reference to the way it is used,²⁰⁶ we can then set on to disentangle our language rules, by comparing it with other language-games.²⁰⁷ But, now, the complexity of the problem involved, as Wittgenstein saw, comes.

We learn the use of the signs in the language-game by being pointed to paradigms, by comparison.²⁰⁸ But, often the various signs we have thus learned belong to different language games though seemingly belonging to a same set of paradigm. Thus, "we lay down rules, a technique, for a game," and "when we follow the rules, things do not turn out as we had assumed." "That we are therefore as it were entangled in our own rules."²⁰⁹ Thus, the problems which are bred "through a misinterpretation of our forms of

²⁰³ Wittgenstein, p. 49.

²⁰⁴ Wittgenstein, p. 49.

²⁰⁵ see Wittgenstein, p. 47.

²⁰⁶ see Wittgenstein, p. 14.

²⁰⁷ see Wittgenstein, p. 50.

²⁰⁸ Wittgenstein, p. 25.

²⁰⁹ Wittgenstein, p. 50.

language have the character of depth." "A grammatical joke" is "deep."²¹⁰

Not many people have been able to appreciate fully the complexity and entanglement of the two independently multiple systems, paradigms and language-games. For one thing, Wittgenstein's concept of language learning through paradigmatic situations is perhaps wrong. H. Putnam, for example, forcefully demonstrates that such a theory as 'speakers learn their native language by being taught what to say in 'paradigmatic situations' is insufficient.

Consider the following discourse: 'She is wearing a red skirt. This is a book. She is fat. That is a chair.' The situation may be 'paradigmatic' for each sentence taken separately...but the discourse as a whole is highly odd...²¹¹

Putnam's point is that the "discourse-analytical regularities are, by and large, as unconscious and obligatory as, say, phonemic or grammatical regularities, and they determine much...of the linguistic character of discourses in English or any other natural language."²¹² And this suggests that a speaker must not only internalize paradigmatic rules enabling him to use isolated sentences in paradigmatic cases, but "he must also internalize some kind of generalized grammar...restricting the sequences of sentences that he is allowed to put together in one discourse."²¹³ Now, as

²¹⁰ Wittgenstein, p. 47.

²¹¹ H. Putnam, "Dreaming and 'Depth Grammar'", Analytical Philosophy, ed. by R.J. Butler, New York, 1962, p. 288.

²¹² Putnam, p. 228.

as Katz and Fodor have pointed out:

the most characteristic feature of language is its ability to make available an infinity of sentences from which a speaker can choose appropriate and wholly novel ones to use when the need arises. That is to say, what qualifies one as a fluent speaker of a language is not the ability to imitate previously encountered utterances but, rather, the ability to extrapolate from them and thus to freely produce and understand utterances never before encountered.²¹⁴

It follows, therefore, that any satisfactory theory of language must account for the fact that "the use of many sentences is projected from the use of simpler sentences."²¹⁵

When seen from the point of view of the whole mechanics of language operation, Wittgenstein's concept of 'paradigmatic comparison' is clearly insufficient, though it sheds light on our understanding of the nature and status of the meaning of a word.

Wittgenstein's concept of manifold language-games contained problems also. As he called it, "there is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods." But then, if our actual linguistic usage generates all forms of "grammatical jokes," how can we appeal to our actual linguistic usage to dissolve those "grammatical jokes"? It seems like a vicious circle. Wittgenstein himself said:

When I talk about language...I must speak the language of everyday. Is this language somehow too coarse and material for what we want to say? Then how is another one to be constructed?²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Katz and Fodor, p. 210.

²¹⁵ Putnam, p. 229.

²¹⁶ Wittgenstein, p. 48-49.

But how can we define our everyday language? It seems indeed inevitable that one can either end up in tautology or in defining some sort of a 'correct' everyday language as a guidepost. Thus, Gilbert Ryle, for example, takes the latter step, saying that an unconditional submission to the mere prevalence is "philosophically pointless, besides being philosophically risky." "What is wanted," according to Ryle, "is the extraction of the logical rules implicitly governing a concept, i.e. a way of operating with an expression (or any other expression that does the same work)."²¹⁷ What van Buren called a "modified verification principle"²¹⁸ is by and large based upon the kind of concern that Ryle is engaged in, that is to say, to posit a 'correct' ordinary language as a basic point of reference.

Thus when van Buren says that "the heart of the method of linguistic analysis is the use of the verification principle," he means, in accord with Oxford philosophers' claim, that the verification principle "shows us the way in which we should translate the sentence in question into other sentences referring directly to some logically possible experience."²¹⁹ As Waismann puts it, in describing the problem of determining whether the ball is charged with electricity:

²¹⁷ Gilbert Ryle, "Ordinary Language", The Philosophical Review, 1953, pp. 167-186, p.177.

²¹⁸ see p. 11 of this thesis.

²¹⁹ Ferré, p.12-13.

I lay down a rule of inference which allows me to pass from the statement 'The ball is charged with electricity' to another that describes an observable situation. By doing this I connect the statement with another one, I make it part of a system of operations, I incorporate it into language, in short, I determine the way it is to be used. In this sense giving the verification of a statement is an important part of giving its use, or, to put it differently, explaining its verification is a contribution to its grammar.²²⁰

Gilbert Ryle attempts to probe into the notion of inference with the theory of a 'systematically misleading expression.' A systematically misleading expression, according to Ryle, is an expression which is "couched in a syntactical form improper to the facts recorded and proper to facts of quite another logical form than the facts recorded."²²¹ Ryle goes on to explain the difference between such two statements as 'Mr. Pickwick is a fiction' and 'Mr. Baldwin is a statesman': Mr. Pickwick, in spite of its grammatical similarity with Mr. Baldwin, is in fact not about a man named Mr. Pickwick but about Dickens' novel.²²²

Ryle steps into dangerous ground, however, when he says that such a statement as 'God exists' or 'Satan does not exist' is a "predicative expression." He states:

That is to say, they are that element in the assertion that something has a specified character, which signifies the character by which the subject is being asserted to be characterized. 'God exists' must mean what is meant by 'Something, and one thing only, is

²²⁰ Waismann, p. 117.

²²¹ Gilbert Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions", Logic and Language, (First Series), ed. by A. Flew, Oxford, 1955, p. 14.

²²² see Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions", p. 19-20.

omniscient, omnipotent, and infinitely good' (or whatever else are the characters summed in the compound character of being a god and the only god). And 'Satan does not exist' must mean what is meant by 'nothing is both devilish and alone in being devilish', or perhaps 'nothing is both devilish and called "Satan"', or even '"Satan" is not the proper name of anything'. To put it roughly, 'x exists' and 'x does not exist' do not assert or deny that a given subject of attributes x has the attribute of existing, but assert or deny the attribute of being x-ish or being an x of something not named in the statement.²²³

Ryle's contention is dubious on two grounds: philosophically and linguistically. Philosophically, it is wrong for, when man talks about the existence of God, he is not necessarily talking about a "highest being" with the attribute of being 'god-ish'; he can be referring to the truth of the idea of God, as such. Wittgenstein has said,

Better: If "X exists" is meant simply to say: "X" has a meaning, - then it is not a proposition which treats of X, but a proposition about our use of language, that is, about the use of the word "X".²²⁴

The word 'God' therefore is meaningful not in the sense of a proposition about a highest being but in the sense that it is informative about the nature of reality in so far as our use of the language goes. Tillich has reminded us:

The Anselmian statement that God is a necessary thought and that therefore this idea must have objective as well as subjective reality is valid in so far as thinking, but its very nature, implies an unconditional element which transcends subjectivity and objectivity, that is, a point of identity which makes the idea of truth possible. However, the statement is not valid

²²³ Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions", p. 16.

²²⁴ Wittgenstein, p. 28.

if this unconditional element is understood as a highest being called God. The existence of such a highest being is not implied in the idea of truth.²²⁵

Ryle's notion of "predicate expression" might indeed apply within the finite categories of experiential facts, where the word 'God' as such is "misleadingly" attributed to a highest being in our universe. But if the word 'God' in our language points to the Reality which transcends the categories of finite objects, then it means that the Ryleian notion of the "systematically misleading expression" is imposing its own dogmatic rule where it does not belong.

Linguistically, Ryle's contention of "systematically misleading expressions" is wrong because it neglects the subtlety of the notion of grammaticalness. Noam Chomsky's famous example, "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously." is certainly a more grammatical sentence than "Furiously sleep ideas green colorless."²²⁶ But, once we begin to explain that "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" is not grammatical in the sense of our everyday language because ideas do not sleep, etc., we immediately come to the hard problem of defining exactly "what is a grammatical sentence?". The fact is, as Chomsky has pointed out, there is no clear-cut definition for grammaticality of a sentence.²²⁷

²²⁵ Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol.1, p. 207.

²²⁶ Noam Chomsky, Syntax Structure, 's Gravenhage, 1957, p. 15.

²²⁷ see Archibald A. Hill, "Grammaticality", Word 17:1-10, 1961; and Noam Chomsky's reply to Hill, "Some Methodological Remarks on Generative Grammar", Word 17:219-239, 1961.

What is so badly needed is a notion of "degree of grammaticalness." Chomsky predicts that

In general, as syntactic description becomes deeper, what appear to be semantic questions fall increasingly within its scope; and it is not entirely obvious whether or where one can draw a natural bound between grammar and "logical grammar," in the sense of Wittgenstein and the Oxford philosophers.²²⁹

But such a time is yet to come. Ryle is right in pointing out that the trap of grammatical jokes is that it induces some men to "generalize about sorts or types of states of affairs and assumes that every statement gives in its syntax a clue to the logical form of the fact that it records."²³⁰ But when he goes on to paraphrase what he considers systematically misleading expressions into their equivalent "less systematically misleading expressions", he is given to a maze of ontological value judgments which no theory of 'ordinary language' today (or perhaps at any other time) can legitimately handle.

It is extremely doubtful if one can really paraphrase say, one language-game into the other. If, as Wittgenstein argued, a word has "a family of meanings"²³¹ without "a fixed meaning,"²³² such an open-texturedness (to use F. Waismann's term) of a word prevents us from verifying conclusively most of our empirical statements.

Phenomenalists have tried to translate what we mean by a material object statement into terms of sense experience. Now such a translation would be possible

²²⁹ Noam Chomsky, "The Logical Basis for Linguistic Theory", (Preprints of papers for the Ninth International Congress of Linguistics, 1962, Cambridge, Mass., p. 524.

²³⁰ Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions", p. 17.

²³¹ Wittgenstein, p. 36.

only if the terms of a material object statement were completely definable. ... As this condition is not fulfilled, the programme of phenomenalism falls flat

...²³³

Waismann concludes that a material object statement, or a psychological statement has a logic of its own, and for this reason cannot be reduced to the level of other statements.²³⁴

Waismann's argument has its own pitfall to be sure. As J.A. Hutchinson pointed out, for instance, "How indeed do we distinguish a real of genuine level from spurious or imaginary levels which conceivably might be multiplied until every statement of every speaker would occupy its own self-enclosed level?"²³⁵ But Waismann has at least illuminated forcefully the problem involved in the work of "translation" from one language-game to the other. Wittgenstein himself said:

--Don't say: "There must be something common, or they would not be called 'games'" -- but look and see whether there is anything common to all.--For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look!²³⁶

Wittgenstein was able to say it because of his conviction on the status of philosophy. But obviously van Buren cannot, as he is involved in the first-order questions, i.e. theological quests. He has to find the "meaning" in the language of

²³³ Waismann, p. 121.

²³⁴ see also Friedrich Waismann, "Language Strata", Logic and Language, (Second Series), ed. by A.Flew, Oxford, 1959, pp. 11-31.

²³⁵ John A. Hutchinson, Language and Faith, Philadelphia, 1963, p. 60.

²³⁶ Wittgenstein, p. 31.

faith, and translate it into another language-game, i.e. the "secular" language of modern man.

van Buren mentions Ryle only once in passing. But his concept of modified verification principle bears a striking resemblance to Ryle's theory. As van Buren admits, his work is "a work of translation in the broadest sense,"²³⁷ that is to say, a paraphrasing of misleading expressions into their less misleading counterparts, so that we can understand the meaning of Easter, for instance, without using a "misleading use of words."²³⁸ If van Buren escapes the pitfall of Ryle's theory it is only because he is ambiguous in what he means by "secular" way of expression, i.e. Ryle's "correct" ordinary language.

"Secularism" is defined by van Buren as "a loose designation of the reaction to the Idealism of the last century."²³⁹ For all practical purposes, however, what he means by the term "secular" is sufficiently attested by his statement:

Today we live in the world where statements about 'how things are' are expected to have some sort of relationship to men's experience of each other and of things.²⁴⁰

It is on the basis of such a broad criterion that the word "god" is rejected because "the empiricist in us does not know God."²⁴¹ that the word "freedom" is preferred to "faith".²⁴²

²³⁷ van Buren, p. 196.

²³⁸ van Buren, p. 145.

²³⁹ van Buren, xiii.

²⁴⁰ van Buren, p. 195.

²⁴¹ van Buren, p. 84.

²⁴² van Buren, p. 123.

Basically, however, van Buren's thesis contains a similar predicament to Ryle's. For, the question of 'what is exactly the secular expression' ultimately raises itself and who can ultimately decide that one expression is secular, i.e. a correct ordinary language, and the other is not? van Buren apparently appeals to prevalence in society. But as Ryle has pointed out, it is extremely risky, if not, in some loose way, theologically pointless.

Thus, van Buren's verification principle is really a rule of thumb based upon the notion that the meaning of a statement is its 'translatability' into the category of secular language. We have so far argued that it is a result, by and large, of the maze of Wittgenstein's notion of establishing an order in our grammatical jokes.

But now, there are three other themes, also somewhat rooted in Wittgenstein's theory, contributing to the general confusion of van Buren's thesis, namely a) acceptance of the notion of blik; b) acceptance of the notion of language-games as constituting separate strata not to be mixed; and c) acceptance of the odd effect due to the juxtaposition of more than one language-game. Those three themes, with his "categorical" commitment to the secular language, all point to separate dimensions, all bearing at the same time the name of verification principle. We shall now examine them briefly.

a) Blik as a verification principle

van Buren claims that "the verification principle shows that theological statements which are meaningless in a secular age when they are taken as straightforward empirical assertions about the world, nevertheless prove to have a use and a meaning as the expressions of a historical perspective with far-reaching empirical consequences in a man's life."²⁴³ That is a straightforward statement in itself with a singular virtue. But, the problem is that it is asserted as a part of the whole program of the verification principle. Take a few examples:

i) "The statement 'the kingdom of God is at hand,' taken alone and apart from one who says it, cannot be verified empirically, but the attitude expressed by such a statement is open to verification by considering the conduct of the one who makes the statement."²⁴⁴

ii) "We can say what would tend to verify a man's saying that Jesus is the key to his understanding and living of life. One could ask him questions and examine his actions."²⁴⁵

iii) "The meaning of the Gospel is its use on the lips of those who proclaim it."²⁴⁶

When the verification principle is stretched to that extent it is no longer on the sphere of linguistic philosophy, at

²⁴³ van Buren, p. 199.

²⁴⁴ van Buren, p. 131-132.

²⁴⁵ van Buren, p. 147-148.

²⁴⁶ van Buren, p. 155.

least as represented by Wittgenstein or Gilbert Ryle. van Buren betrays that leap himself when he discusses the nature of sense-content statements.

Statements of sense-content cannot be verified by common-sense or empirical means. That is to say, they cannot be verified by a shared sense-experience, since they do not say what "all of us" can see but only what "I saw." Nor can they be checked against empirical data open to any and every competent investigator who cares to examine them, for again, a sense-content statement is about what "I saw," not about what is "there for everyone to see." Only "I" can record what was "on the mirror of my mind." But this is only to say that sense-content statements ~~are~~ not common-sense or empirical assertions, and more cannot be said against them. The way to verify a statement of sense-content is to see if the words and actions of the person who makes the statement conform to it. The test is one of consistency.²⁴⁷

But now, that is an extraordinary claim. For, by the same token every human expression is an ultimately sense-content expression. So, why should we be bothered with a verification principle at all? But we are concerned with the clarification of what Wittgenstein called the grammatical jokes in our language which is the "consentement collectif". "Nous venons de voir que la langue est une institution sociale."²⁴⁸

All the expressions, whether they are what van Buren calls "sense-content" statements or "empirical statements" or "common-sense statements", are both essentially sense-content statements in that they are spoken by some "I"s, and social phenomena in that they are uttered and understood by the other

²⁴⁷ van Buren, p. 129.

²⁴⁸ Ferdinand de Saussure, Cours de Linguistic General, Paris, 1960, p. 33.

members of the same speech community in consentment collectif. We must conclude, therefore, that what van Buren does in his argument with sense-content statements is in reality to deny the formula: the meaning of a word is its use in the language, on the linguistic level.

b) Language-games as constituting different strata..

The notion of language-games (almost in the sense of Waismann's theory of language strata)²⁴⁹ is utilized by van Buren primarily in his polemics against Bultmann's school. His five objections against Rudolf Bultmann and Schubert Ogden, for example, include the following two:

i. Such expressions used by Ogden as 'experienced nonobjective reality' or 'unconditioned gift and demand of God's love, which is the ever-present ground and end of all created things' are "meaningless" because they suggest "a confusion of categories, a mixing of language-games."²⁵⁰

ii. "It is meaningless to speak analogically about God. Bultmann asserts that we may speak of 'God's act' if we do so analogically, on the model of human action and encounter." Ogden further develops Bultmann's assertion by saying that "statements about God and his activities are 'statements about human existence,' and vice versa." But, van Buren contends:

if in the language of faith a statement about God is really a statement about man, if what faith speaks of

²⁴⁹ see p. 72 of this thesis.

²⁵⁰ van Buren, p. 64-65.

is 'exhaustively and without remainder; man and his self-understanding, then to say that this is equally language about 'God and his activities' is to assert that the same words refer to man, where they are verifiable, and to God, where they are not.²⁵¹

Such accusations, however, are not justifiable even in van Buren's own assertion: "Linguistic analysis calls our attention to the wide variety of language-games and all kinds of words."²⁵² The fact is that van Buren is not talking about the varieties of language-games as such, but language-games acceptable within the sphere of what he calls "secular" language, including "discernment, duty, or commitment" situations.²⁵³ Thus, van Buren's indictment against Bultmann's school runs: "A man who shares the empirical spirit of our age cannot interchange these statements about God and man at all."²⁵⁴ But then, van Buren's "categorical" commitment to secularism clearly contradicts his own explanation of variety of language-games.

c) The odd effect of juxtaposition

van Buren is willing to adopt Ian Ramsey's theory of Language of Oddity²⁵⁵ into his own thesis. For example, he states:

The linguistic oddity of the statement "Jesus has risen" comes from the juxtaposition of words from two dissimilar language-games. ...Logically, it would be improper to use the word "is" of anyone

²⁵¹ van Buren, p. 65-67.

²⁵² van Buren, p. 105.

²⁵³ van Buren, p. 105.

²⁵⁴ van Buren, p. 68.

²⁵⁵ see pp. 23-29 of this thesis.

who had died. But in this case, "is" forms part of a verb which had its logical placing in Jewish eschatology, in the hope and its expression of a future given by "God!" ...The assertion "Jesus is risen" takes the name of a historical man and says that he was of the realm of "the end!" ... We have no means of knowing what would count for or against the declaration that Jesus is risen, and granting our empirical attitudes, we would say that it is not an empirical assertion, what-ever it may be. The New Testament writers do tell us something, however, about the thoughts and conduct appropriate to one who would make this assertion. ...It is a movement to an "end-word" statement, which is verified by the conduct of the man who uses it.²⁵⁶

But, now, if the oddity of religious language can be explained away historically as a result of the juxtaposition of more than one language-game, and further can be verified by the conduct of men who use it, why can we not do the same thing in our time? Bultmann and Ogden are accused by van Buren of looking to two norms, Heidegger and Jesus of Nazareth. And Ogden, (a logical consequent of Bultmann according to van Buren), is further accused of "dispensing with Jesus!"²⁵⁷ "It is Heidegger who gives the final definition of Ogden's 'norm'."²⁵⁸ van Buren, however, surely cannot afford such an accusation against Bultmann's school either theologically or in the name of linguistic analysis. Theologically, van Buren himself lets the issue of the divinity of Jesus drop.²⁵⁹ From the point of view of linguistic analysis as propounded

²⁵⁶ van Buren, p. 130-132.

²⁵⁷ van Buren, p. 73.

²⁵⁸ van Buren, p. 79.

²⁵⁹ see, for example, van Buren, p. 79 and p. 102.

by Wittgenstein, van Buren's method is not in the strict sense a linguistic analysis at all. His verification principle is simply a rule of thumb based on the "loosely" designated notion of "secularism." A linguistic philosopher, R. Hepburn has argued that Bultmann has "not made clear the logical structure of his theology."²⁶⁰ Undoubtedly it is hard to understand Bultmann; as in Karl Barth's words, "I must confess I know of no contemporary theologian who has so much to say about understanding, or one which has so much cause to complain about being misunderstood."²⁶¹ But, it would have been fairer to Bultmann if van Buren viewed Bultmann as trying to answer Heidegger from a Christian point of view.²⁶² Just as van Buren attempts to translate the language-game of faith into the language-game of secularism, so does Bultmann, into the language-game of existentialism. In the final analysis, Bultmann is "simply carrying to a logical conclusion the doctrine of justification by faith in the sphere of epistemology!"²⁶³ And such is van Buren's own position fundamentally.

260 see van Buren, p. 67.

261 Karl Barth, "Rudolf Bultmann - An Attempt to Understand Him", Kerygma and Myth, vol. II, ed. by Hans-Werner Bartsch, tr. by R.H. Fuller, London, 1962, p. 84.

262 Sherman E. Johnson, "Two Great New Testament Interpreters" Religion and Life, 1952, pp. 288ff; as quoted by Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Present State of the Debate", Kerygma and Myth, vol. II, p. 43.

263 see Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Present State of the Debate", Kerygma and Myth, vol. II, p. 80.

Chapter Three: Toward a Reconstruction
of Christian Natural Theology

van Buren states, "the choice of a non-cognitive 'blik' conception of faith, rather than of a cognitive conception," is "fundamental" to his study.²⁶⁴ The choice is made primarily because the cognitive approach builds its case "on a natural sense of the divine, on natural religion and a natural revelation."²⁶⁵ van Buren's understanding of the cognitive and non-cognitive approaches, however, is an inadequate one. The cognitive approach, he states, "tends to mark off a certain area of experience as 'religious' and it argues for a religious way of knowing, in contrast to other (secular?) ways of knowing."²⁶⁶ But, such is clearly too hasty an assumption.

van Buren criticizes Flew, Hare, and a host of Oxford linguistic philosophers, at one point, as theologically anachronistic:

The faith-statements which have occupied these philosophers belong essentially to the area of "natural theology" as it was taught in the eighteenth century. ...the revolution in philosophy of the past fifty years does not seem to have taken cognizance of the revolution in theology of almost exactly the same period. It may be too strong to say that they have been working with the religious language learned in Sunday school...²⁶⁷

In fact, however, van Buren's own approach is simply the other

264 van Buren, p. 97.

265 van Buren, p. 98.

266 van Buren, p. 99.

267 van Buren, p. 104.

side of the same coin that represents the eighteenth century methodology of natural theology. Christian natural theology in the thought of the eighteenth century was constructed on the metaphysical deduction from the universally accepted premises, a logical argument leading to indisputable conclusions within that framework. van Buren now claims to build his system on the empirical induction, from the "universally" accepted language-game in today's secularism. Both pretend to be a system that purports to account for the whole in one sweep. The system that we so desperately need today, however, is the one which is freed both from the singular deduction and the singular induction. Whatever our model may be, it should not be a kind of super-science, using the mathematical tools of natural science and in some mysterious way reaching conclusions about the world which scientific inquiry can never reach.²⁶⁸

Speaking of today's picture of Christian natural theology, H.E.Root rightly argues:

Our thinking is still confined to the familiar grooves: natural and revealed; reason and faith. It may seem paradoxical, but there would be point in saying that a restoration natural theology will finally depend upon the abandonment of our present understanding of what it is.²⁶⁹

As Root reminds us, "the health and vitality of theology and Christian faith depends upon the health of natural theology."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ see Howard E. Root, "Beginning All Over Again", Soundings, ed. by A.R.Vidler, Cambridge, 1962, p. 16.

²⁶⁹ Root, p. 10.

²⁷⁰ Root, p. 12.

The model we need is a kind of Christian natural theology that does not impose upon us an "either-or" question with mathematical necessity. To be sure, as Root also points out, "we are on the threshold of the most serious problem which Christian faith faces in our time: the existence of a secularized (or post-religious) imagination for which natural or metaphysical theology is no longer alive."²⁷¹ But, that is precisely the reason that we need to reconstruct our Christian natural theology that would allow "men's inspiration to reach at the deepest levels of thought and imagination."²⁷² Non-metaphysical Christianity is simply an illusion. Even van Buren's attempt, as we have seen, is based upon the metaphysical assumptions embodied in Richard Hare's, Ian Ramsey's and R.G.Collingwood's theories. The question is not "whether men can or will do metaphysics but only whether they will do it well or badly."²⁷³

van Buren's model, as it turns out, with its modified verification principle and with its categorical commitment to the non-cognitive approach, has nothing to say about the forgiveness of sin, about the way to deal with man's "sickness unto death." The fundamental problem in van Buren's model is that it is based on what Collingwood called the positivist's methodology of science, in which the first step is to observe facts and the second step is to ask what, if anything, they

²⁷¹ Root, p. 17.

²⁷² Root, p. 17.

²⁷³ Root, p. 15.

prove. For, by doing so, van Buren has forgotten the very nature of the presupposition in which the biblical message is delivered. In this sense, van Buren's problem lies not so much in his attempt to meet today's secularism with secular language as in his positivistic stance in constructing his system on the idea that every notion is the class of observable facts. For, the important thing is not whether or not we can bring out the point of blik assertion in spite of the observable facts, but rather, that the observable facts as such need not constitute the starting point. Our reconstructed Christian natural theology must be one "in which the first stage is to ask questions and the second stage is to get it answered."²⁷⁴ If van Buren has taught us anything, it is that the positivistic model of scientific procedure, when applied to the Scriptural exegesis, most likely forces us to dispense with the divinity of Christ.

We shall now suggest a direction into which the reconstruction of Christian natural theology may be fruitfully explored. And such a step must necessarily start from a sufficient understanding of the basic presupposition into which the biblical message is cast.

According to Bultmann, in the tradition of classic Greek thought, the universe, i.e. "kosmos," was conceived as a totality "bound together by rationally comprehensible relationships of law into a unified structure containing heaven and 274 Collingwood, p. 278.

earth and all living beings, including gods and men."²⁷⁵ It reflects Plato's concept of One-ness and Aristotle's doctrine of the final cause, i.e., nature is pulled ahead by impersonal divine force. Any type of verification principle would be effective indeed to bring out the nature of religious assertion within such a framework, for, language may hold, in that case, a key to the structure of the whole universe. The Old Testament, however, does not contain a term corresponding to the Greek "kosmos". It does occasionally speak of the "all" and, much more often, of "heaven and earth", "but always in such a way that God himself is not included in it, but is always distinguished from it as the Creator."²⁷⁶ Further, it was in that sense that "Hellenistic Judaism took over and used the term 'kosmos'", and it was in that sense that the New Testament used it. Thus, God in the Old and New Testament tradition operates in the world of nature and of history not by mechanical necessity but by the action of His personal force. As Charles Price puts it "God does not pull the cosmos ahead by impersonal necessity to its appointed goal."²⁷⁷ For Paul, for instance, who was, as in his whole theological outlook, "thoroughly true to the tradition of the Judaism which he had learnt at the feet of Gamaliel",²⁷⁸ "kosmos" was much more a

²⁷⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, vol. I, tr. by K. Grobel, New York, 1951, p. 254.

²⁷⁶ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 254.

²⁷⁷ Charles P. Price, Christianity and Modern Science, Washington, 1962, p. 12.

²⁷⁸ Wilfred L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentile, Cambridge, 1939, p. 55.

time-concept than a space concept.

It is sphere of human activity as being, on the one hand, a temporary thing hastening toward its end (I Cor. 7:31), and on the other hand, the sphere of anti-godly power under whose sway the individual who is surrounded by it has fallen.²⁷⁹

"Kosmos" constituted in Paul mainly the implicit or explicit antithesis to the sphere of God, "whether 'kosmos' denotes the totality of human possibilities and conditions of life (I Cor 3:22, 7:31ff), or whether it implies persons in their attitudes and judgments (I Cor 1:20, 27f) or in their sinfulness and enmity toward God (Rom.3:6,19; 11:15; II Cor 5:19)."²⁸⁰ "Kosmos" is the world of men, which is constituted by that which the individual does and upon which he bestows his care, and yet in which it itself gains the upper hand over the individual.²⁸¹ And behind such a conception of "kosmos", there lies Paul's conviction that "natural man has always already decided against God."²⁸² The natural or 'psychic' man cannot understand the truth about God (I Cor 2:14). Truly, Paul knows that God reveals Himself in all His works, in creation, in temporal blessings, in wrath, and in judgment and in salvation. But, he cannot follow, for instance, the traditional model of 'natural theology' and seek God behind His creation, leaving us to find our way to the Creator by following His tracks in that which he made. For Paul, as well as for the New Testa-

279 Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.256.

280 Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.255.

281 Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.256.

282 Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.259.

ment writers in general, "man's failure is not that he has neglected to speculate about God, that he is remiss in finding his way" back to the author of the world, "via causalitatis, via negationis, and via eminentiae", but is that, "however God has revealed himself in His mighty works, man does not honor Him and thank Him as God."²⁸³ The Old and New Testament tradition does not in fact assert any mechanical connection between the course of events and the being of God, but rather, for that matter, a gap between the natural rule of this world and God's operation.

What this means is that if one's effort to defend the Christian assertion is limited in the framework of this world, he is bound to dispense with the divinity of Christ. Little wonder also that van Buren cannot give a sufficient account for the "glory of God" in the language of St. Paul.²⁸⁴ It is in the nature of the biblical presupposition itself that the kerygmatic message is "beyond our grasp and never at our disposal"; any apologetic endeavour "is not the message itself."²⁸⁵

The apologia is needed, however, precisely because it is the nature of Christian apologia to answer "the questions implied in the 'situation' in the power of the eternal message and with the means provided by the situation whose question it answers."²⁸⁶ Thus the Christian natural theology that we

²⁸³ Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. by C.C. Rasmussen, Philadelphia, 1944, pp. 106-107.

²⁸⁴ see van Buren, p. 198.

²⁸⁵ Tillich, p. 52.

²⁸⁶ Tillich, p. 6.

hope to have is, as in the words of Root, "an ordered and consistent picture of the world" which shows "the grounds for that total picture of the world which we indicate when we speak of the Christian faith."²⁸⁷ Such a Christian natural theology needs the following two aspects: one, the aspect that deals with the question-and-answer in regard to man's existence, (and here Tillich's ontological argument speaks forcefully); the other, the aspect of the status of natural and social science, to which the study of language should rightly belong inasmuch as human language is a social institution. We shall conclude our review with a brief sketch of those two aspects.

In Tillich's ontological argument, "the categories of experience are categories of finitude."²⁸⁸ Thus, if we attempt to grasp the infinitude with the categories of finitude, we necessarily fail. At the same time, if we restrict reason to the acceptance of the 'unconditional imperative' as the only approach to reality itself, then we forget our reason's bondage to the categories of finitude, which is disastrous because we become aware of **the infinite** in our analysis of the categorical structure of reason in which we are imprisoned.²⁸⁹

It is essentially the nature of man that his existence is "self-contradictory," and his life, "ambiguous."²⁹⁰ Now,

²⁸⁷ Root, p. 13.

²⁸⁸ Tillich, p. 82.

²⁸⁹ see Tillich, p. 82.

²⁹⁰ Tillich, p. 81.

according to Tillich, the task of the Christian Church is to establish the ostensive definition of the Infinitude in terms of Jesus of Nazareth.

The basis of this claim is the Christian doctrine that the Logos became flesh, that the principle of the divine self-revelation has become manifest in the event "Jesus as the Christ."²⁹¹

"If this message is true," Tillich contends, "Christian theology has received a foundation which transcends the foundation of any other theology and which itself cannot be transcended. Christian theology has received something which is absolutely concrete and absolutely universal at the same time."²⁹² And that will be the Christian answer to man's quest for his ultimate concern.

Tillich goes further in defining the nature of man,

Man is the image of God because in him the ontological elements are complete and united on a creaturely basis, just as they are complete and united in God as the creative ground. Man is the image of God because his logos is analogous to the divine logos, so that the divine logos can appear as man without destroying the humanity of man.²⁹³

It is thus an essential nature of man that his existence is "self-contradictory."²⁹⁴

The centre of our whole being is involved in the centre of all being; and the centre of all being rests in the centre of our being. ...he knows that he cannot forget it. ...the God whom he cannot flee is the Ground of his being.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Tillich, p. 16.

²⁹² Tillich, p. 16.

²⁹³ Tillich, p. 259.

²⁹⁴ Tillich, p. 81.

²⁹⁵ Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations, pp. 53ff; as quoted by Robinson, p. 58.

Now what this means is that, in spite of the self-contradictions of our existence, the Depth and Ground of our being is nevertheless to be found 'in the common' in the midst of us. As Bishop Robinson expounded on Tillich's theory:

(The Christian sacrament) is the assertion of 'the "beyond" in the midst of our life! the holy in the common. The Holy Communion is the point at which the common, the communal, becomes the carrier of the unconditional, as the Christ makes himself known in the breaking and sharing of bread. Holy Communion is communion, community-life, in sacris, in depth, at the level at which we are not merely in human fellowship but 'in Christ', not merely in love but in Love, united with the ground and restorer of our whole being.²⁹⁶

For Christianity, the holy is thus the depth of the common. Whatever term we use, either 'existential' or 'psychological' or 'theological', we cannot ignore the fact that we are somehow aware of our fallen state and of the salvation for us in the midst of our depravity. The kind of approach, however, that van Buren utilizes, i.e. an approach which starts with choosing "non-cognitive" in contrast to "cognitive" approach, cannot cope with the problem that exceeds the point beyond the observable facts. Hence, it is impotent in the face of man's "sickness unto death". And it is for this reason that van Buren's The Secular Meaning of the Gospel has nothing to say about the Forgiveness of Sin, about the Way to resolve the self-contradiction of man's existence. The Biblical outlook of the world is that God is not necessarily included in the mechanism of the cosmological operation. The biblical²⁹⁶ Robinson, p. 86.

message says that man has access to God in spite of that situation, in his tie with Logos. Thus, any attempt to establish a Christian assertion only in terms of this world is bound to fall short of the Christian presupposition and of the Christian message. van Buren attempts to leap beyond the limit of observable facts through Richard Hare's blik argument. But where does a blik lead us? Does it point to an answer to man's ultimate concern? As Tillich states, since "every answer to the question says something about the structure of being"²⁹⁸ to banish Christian assertions into the nonrational corner of subjectivism (which is precisely what Hare's blik argument amounts to) is a death sentence against Christianity.²⁹⁹

In regard to the aspect of the status of the study of language, we must also draw our clue from the biblical presupposition. Collingwood's work on metaphysics, (from which, strange to say, both van Buren and we ourselves have profited), suggests that it is only in the lowest type of thinking that we are wholly unaware that every thought we find ourselves thinking is the answer to a question. And, the question we, as Christians, ask is derived precisely from our awareness of the self-contradiction of our existence as viewed in relation to the Infinitude to which the kerygmatic message points. In other words, our Christian question is a

²⁹⁸ Tillich, p. 20.
²⁹⁹ Cf. Tillich, p. 15.

product of our Christian presupposition.

What does such an understanding say to the status of our study of language in our framework of Christian natural theology? It is particularly revealing in this connection to re-view the rise of modern natural and social science.

According to Charles P. Price, it is in the "gap" between the natural rule of cosmological operation of this world and the will of God that the modern science made its debut. As long as the Aristotelian view of reality was bound by the yoke of the underlying Greek assumption of the world as a rationally comprehensible, single whole, every scientific theory must somehow be accounted for in its necessary tie with the divine operation within the universe. Then that Aristotelian view was liberated from that yoke and "brought in touch with a triumphant confidence in the goodness and value of the actual world created and redeemed by God".³⁰⁰ At the hands of Franciscan monks who inherited the joyful and intoxicating spirit of St. Francis who sang for "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon", a truly experimental methodology was adopted. Thus, Roger Bacon (1214-1294) was the first man who insisted that experimental methods alone could give certainty in science.

How do you find out what a tree it? You don't enter into the resources of your mind to find what treeness is, the way the Platonists would. You go and look at tree; you collect data about trees. Experimental methods alone, said Bacon, give you certainty in science.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ Price, p. 10.
³⁰¹ Price, p. 9.

Human language is, as we have mentioned earlier,³⁰² fundamentally a social institution. And as such it must be viewed in the spirit of post-Baconian science. Richard Hare is quoted as having said:

I think if you are a Catholic and are going to be a philosopher, you're almost bound to do one of two things. One is to stick rigidly to the formal kinds of philosophy - I mean mathematical logic, pure linguistic analysis, and that kind of thing. The other is to do ordinary philosophy - my sort - but with a different slant.³⁰³

What we propose is to take up pure linguistic analysis, not only Wittgenstein philosophy but linguistic science as propounded by Massachusetts Institute of Technology linguists led by Noam Chomsky.³⁰⁴ Let us just look and see how our language works with the spirit of post-Baconian science.

It is a great merit of van Buren's work that it has made one very important point, i.e. to be a Christian is to be a Christian man in his conduct and in his action. But, we should be able to arrive at that position without an aid of strenuous verification principle., which in its very nature is built upon some kind of value judgment in the relationship between the observable facts and the reality which those observable facts are supposed to indicate. From the point of view of methodology, to induce the point of Christian assertion by way of a verification principle, however, is to put a cart in front of horses. Our attitude toward the study of language in ³⁰³ Ved Mehta, p. 108.
³⁰⁴ see appendix of this thesis.

our Christian natural theology is to be scientific as scientific as possible without any hasty value judgment.

"A name signifies only what is an element of reality. What cannot be destroyed; what remains the same in all changes." -But what is that? -Why, it swam before our minds as we said the sentence!³⁰⁵

An element of reality that we seek for is not hidden in our words. It is hidden, if in anything, in our humanness (of which our language is only an inefficient representation), which through the mystery of Incarnation and Resurrection guides us in our way to be with God.

³⁰⁵ Wittgenstein, p. 29.

Appendix: Noam Chomsky's Linguistic Science

It is an interesting fact that the so-called "new style" linguistic school in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s, represented by Martin Joos, Bernard Bloch and Charles Hockett, among others, built their linguistic theory on a kind of verification principle. They almost unanimously insisted upon a rigorous separation of levels as the basic Commandment in linguistic science. And behind such an insistence was an assumption that the linguistic theory must provide a practical and mechanical method for actually constructing a grammar. Such a view of linguistic theory was perhaps heightened by the trend in American descriptive linguistics which we might conveniently term "post-Boazian fallacy". The stand was, for instance, vigorously advocated by M. Joos:

The practicing analyst, in the American sense, is the one who has a language previously quite unknown to him to work on and has to do everything from the ground up.... For him, analysis begins with his own phonetic transcribing. This is segmental because his marks on paper have to be countable. Hence...he views his segmented transcription with dark suspicion. The segmentation needs justifying. In his Boas tradition (languages can differ without limit as to either extent or direction), no universal theory of segments can be called upon to settle the moot points.³⁰⁶

The question, then, was how one can "justify" the segmentation. The "verification principle" which the "new-style" linguists depended upon to justify their segmentation was a set of four working tools, namely a) linearity; b) invariance;

³⁰⁶ Martin Joos' comment on C.F.Hockett's "Peiping Phonology", Readings in Linguistics, New York, 1958, p.228.

c) biuniqueness; and d) local determinacy.³⁰⁷ And their justification for that "verification principle" was the tacit assumption that the principle of separation of levels must not be violated. Thus, Bernard Bloch stated:

...when (the analyst) comes to write down his description of the language so that others may see the structure that he has discovered, he must group the many facts to be presented (since he cannot present them all at once) into separate compartments or levels, each organically distinct from the others; and here the requirements of good method and good style demand that the statements made on any given level be as independent as possible of those made at other levels --particularly, that they assume as known only what has been said earlier, nothing that is to be said later.³⁰⁸

From such an insistence on the rigorous separation of levels, in turn, grew a strenuous demand on working procedure: "we pretend (if necessary...) ...that we know nothing about words and word-boundaries. Since the spaces represent nothing, they have to be taken out..."³⁰⁹ because, for one thing,

...when morphemes are defined formally, it becomes perfectly obvious that use of position in morphemes or relative to morpheme borders as a criterion in phonemic analysis is completely circular.³¹⁰

It has become increasingly apparent, however, that such a procedural method actually culminated into an unacceptable conclusion in the consensus of every man's common sense. As

linguistic science purports to deal with a natural language,

³⁰⁷ see, for the definition and explanation, Noam Chomsky, "The Logical Basis for Linguistic Theory", pp.538-539.

³⁰⁸ Bernard Bloch, "Studies in Colloquial Japanese" IV, Phonemics", Readings in Linguistics, ed. by M. Joos, New York, 1958, p.348a.

³⁰⁹ Charles F. Hockett, "Review", Language, 1951, p.340.

³¹⁰ C.F.Hockett, Studies in Linguistics, 7.40 (1940).

such an outcome was indeed fatal to the very justification of linguistic science itself. It was only natural that the principle adhered to by the "new-style" linguists was almost completely demolished when Noam Chomsky came out with his theory of transformational grammar, namely, that, linguistic theory should not in practice aim to provide more than a practical evaluation procedure.³¹¹ This theory thus presented by Chomsky implies that linguistic theory is not to be dominated by some unquestioned premises represented by "verification principle" but to be evaluated strictly in terms of its adequacy to meet the questions we seek. Complete victory of Chomsky's school in today's American linguistic science is in a way a witness to the inadequacy of the positivist's mode of thought which often represents itself in the form of a verification principle.

³¹¹ see Noam Chomsky, Syntactic Structure, pp. 52-54.

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